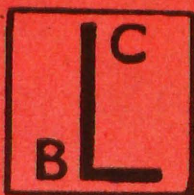


# IN SEARCH OF THE MILLENNIUM

by

JULIUS BRAUNTHAL



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# IN SEARCH OF THE MILLENNIUM

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*By the same Author :*

NEED GERMANY SURVIVE ?

# IN SEARCH OF THE MILLENNIUM

by

JULIUS BRAUNTHAL

*With an Introduction by*  
H. N. BRAILSFORD

LONDON  
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1945

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TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
OTTO BAUER  
AND  
THERESE SCHLESINGER

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## PREFACE

THIS book is an attempt to show how the Socialist idea was perceived by a young Viennese worker forty years ago and how he experienced its changes through four of the most fateful decades in the history of the human race. Though the book is biographical, it is not a biography; nor is it a history, though it is historical. It is meant to be a humble personal recapitulation of events in the second half of a most fascinating period in man's struggle for a more rational society. The period of this struggle covers about a century, from the publication of the *Communist Manifesto* until the Second Great War. Whatever be the future destiny of Socialism as an idea and a movement, it will differ greatly in thought, structure and emotional appeal from its original form. It may perhaps be worth preserving something of the human story of its past.

To a young worker of forty years ago the Socialist idea was a magnificent vision, "clothed with the beauty of a thousand stars". It appeared as a message of a Millennium of peace, democratic fellowship and material abundance. Belief in a Millennium might perhaps be regarded as infantile folly, but it is not only the privilege of youth, but also the dynamic force of all great, creative thought on human affairs, from Isaiah and Plato to Rousseau, Saint Simon and Karl Marx. At any rate, it was this belief which gave the Socialist movement that irresistible enthusiasm with which it was imbued until its first great crisis in 1914.

Though somewhat sobered and saddened in forty years' un-availing search for the Millennium, I still believe that the Marxian conception of a Socialist world revolution is the only alternative to the tragic reality of nationalistic-imperialist world wars. To the future historian the First Great War as well as the Second (and perhaps the Third) will appear as stages of a single crisis, caused by the anarchy of the present economic system and by the fetish of political nationalism; while in the international Socialist

Movement he will see the only possible force which might have been able to avert it. In his search for causes and effects as manifested in single events, he would probably name the failure of the German revolution in 1919 as one of the great misfortunes of humanity. The Socialist world revolution would indeed have been within reach if the Socialist revolution in Germany had succeeded; its collapse, however, was among the main causes of the second stage of the world crisis.

Though the hopes of my youth remain unrealised, I should be ungrateful if I were to conceal the great happiness which I derived from service in the Labour movement and from fellowship with so many men and women of the international Socialist community. Although only a few of them are named in this narrative, I am deeply indebted to many more for their inspiration and for the pattern of life they gave to me.

In this narrative I have sometimes recorded conversations which took place many years ago. These conversations were often marks in my life, so they remained in my memory, if not in their exact phraseology (though I attempted to record them as precisely and literally as I could), at least in their substance.

I also wish to express my gratitude to two most faithful friends intimately connected with the book: Professor Edward A. Shils of the Chicago University for having urged me to surmount my reluctance to write the book, and Mr. Harold Bers for all the trouble he gladly took in revising its text.

JULIUS BRAUNTHAL

*London,*  
*April 1945.*

## INTRODUCTION

EXILE is a harsh discipline. It uproots a man from the landscape he loved: it severs him from kindred and comrades: his ears must grow familiar with strange sounds and his mind with uncongenial habits of thought: worst of all, in his new environment he is an alien who may not act on others, or use his will to influence the society that harbours him. It is an experience from which few emerge without a corroding sense of frustration. In these pages an Austrian exile, using our language, has told the story of his life for English readers. It is in many ways an unusual book, for it is the fruit of a rare character. This exile escaped the frustration that might have been his fate. How did he manage it? Braunthal's secret will be clear to anyone who has read even a few chapters of his book. He carried with him intact from the ruins of his work in Vienna to the alien world of London his faith in socialism as an international creed. He had to learn our language, our history and our ways of thought. He succeeded because he never felt himself a foreigner among us; the same social contrasts confronted him, the same struggle for justice, the same aspiration to make an end of class. The workers with whom at first he could not converse were still his comrades, who had reached his creed along a different path through history. Nor did he ever think of the events that had shattered his own Movement as events peculiar to Austria. He had lived and worked in Berlin and the Sudetenland as well as in Vienna; observation as well as reflection had made him a citizen of Europe. When democracy went down before the assault of the Fascists, first in Germany and then in his own country, he knew that a struggle had begun which must engulf the whole Continent and our island also. The result was that even in this tranquil land of ours, slow as it was to grasp its peril, he never felt himself a demobilised soldier. He learned to understand us, because he had the clue to our rôle in the European drama.

But that is only part of the explanation of his success; Julius



Braunthal developed in his earliest years a talent of sympathy and a gift of understanding his fellowmen. He was always, in Blake's phrase, a "mental traveller". Born in an old-world orthodox Jewish household, his first and most daring adventure was to explore as an adolescent the continent of modern thought and to find for himself a home in it. After that achievement, the discovery of England must have seemed a comparatively easy enterprise.

The result of this experience was that Braunthal learned not merely our language but how to talk to us. He has told us a good deal of the history of the stormy years that began and ended in war. He has sketched with intimate affection portraits of the remarkable men who created and led the Austrian Socialist Movement. He has contrived to reproduce its atmosphere for us—the beliefs, the hopes, the activities that were for so many of its members the most important part of their lives. He could not have done it before his sojourn in England. Throughout this book he is interpreting what is for most of us an unfamiliar world, and he succeeds in making it intelligible and almost homely. Out of the frustrations of exile he has snatched opportunity. Few higher services could be rendered to the cause of international understanding. It is done with such warmth of heart and such clear intelligence that every reader of it will feel, when he lays down the book, that he has gained several millions of new comrades.

It has been my good fortune to see something of several continental socialist movements, in Moscow, Budapest, Madrid and Salonica as well as in Paris and Berlin. I can recall several talks with Jean Jaurès and it was for years my habit to read everything this humane and generous thinker wrote in his organ, *l'Humanité*. Much of it I still remember clearly. I shared the respect which all who knew them felt for the organising talent and the disciplined steadiness of the Germans. But it was among the Austrians that I felt most happily at home. More ardently and steadily than any other continental party they lived Socialism as a creed that covers the whole of life. It was for them so much more than a political tactic and an economic programme. They were, to begin with, democrats, who conducted all the activities of their Movement by free discussion in the day-

light. Everything was debated with a rare integrity and on a high intellectual level, both in the pages of the *Arbeiter Zeitung* and at their conferences. For dodges and intrigues, for dishonesty and half-truths, their tradition had developed a healthy contempt. They understood what some revolutionary parties have never grasped, that the habit of truth is the foundation on which every genuine human society must be built. Socialism was for them first of all a moral code, which exacts, even in the heat of battle, not merely courage and devotion, but humanity and a scrupulous respect for the individual citizen, his mind, his body and his rights.

It would be untrue to say that they were always loyal to their principles in hours of difficulty, but this at least may be said—that they never forgot them or relapsed into a habit of opportunism. Behind their day to day politics they had a view of life and a conception of the meaning and processes of history which inspired all their thinking and gave them even in misfortune and defeat an enviable serenity and the assurance of ultimate victory. This Marxist interpretation of history gave them the same sense that destiny was behind them in their struggles, which the invincible Puritans of the Commonwealth possessed, because they trusted the promises of God. This party led a full and generous life. It cared for the things of the intellect: it respected science and, above all, it loved music. It was resolved from its earliest days to give the workers who joined it their share in the cultural heritage of mankind. They succeeded brilliantly, in spite of their poverty, in making the city of Vienna a visible embodiment of their creed—in the architecture of their housing schemes, in its schools and its admirable service of health. The party that had this great achievement in social organisation to its credit could have given us, what does not yet exist, the model of a democratic Socialist Economy, if it had been able to win among the peasants the secure majority it possessed in the capital—provided, one must add, that the Great Powers which overshadowed the nominal independence of Austria had left it free to shape its own internal life.

Finally, this party has always grasped sincerely the international mission of Socialism. Themselves a party of opposition to Habsburg Imperialism, these German-speaking workers learned

in the days of the Monarchy to make common cause with their fellow-subjects of the Slav nationalities. After the last war the weakness of their dwarf republic taught them, if the lesson were needed, how closely their fate was linked with that of the working class in neighbouring countries. More boldly and steadily than anyone else in the Socialist International, they struggled to revive it, and make of it a militant reality, while paralysis overtook others who had the strength but lacked the will to lead.

But why should I say more? The reader will find in this book a vivid and intimate portrait of this remarkable party, which focussed in itself more faithfully than any other the tragedy of European Socialism—its faith, its intelligence and its courage, no less than its apparent failure. And why did it fail? Not, I think, by any fault of its own, though doubtless it made its mistakes. It failed and was overthrown because it was fatally and inevitably an item in the European chaos, a pawn on the continental chessboard. How many of us have realised even yet that the conception of national sovereignty and independence with which we grew up is completely out-of-date? It is a commonplace among us to say that we must be prepared to sacrifice something of our national sovereignty to an international authority. This way of expressing ourselves has some meaning when Americans use it: it would mean something if Russians used it (which they never do): it has some significance, but less than we suppose, on British lips. But if we apply it to any country of the Continent, Russia excepted, it is antiquarian nonsense. Sovereignty has become, save for the Big Three, a meaningless myth of the jurists. Stalin may have been right when he asserted the possibility of Socialism in one country—provided that country has 180 million inhabitants, a Red Army and a nearly self-sufficient economy. With less than these resources, no country can in these days carve out its own destiny. It will have to conform, at least in the main drift of its creative policy, to the forces that overshadow it—yesterday to Fascism, tomorrow— But how wide is the choice? It may be absorbed in the Russian sphere of influence. It may take shelter under the wing of Anglo-American Big Business, if that combination remains united and retains its interest in Europe.

Is there a third alternative? In plain words, do we in this island who call ourselves Socialists retain our faith in our democratic and humanitarian creed, as a factor in world politics? We have to choose. If we are content to be a mere pressure group, we may secure in our own island some far from negligible social reforms: we may even with luck contrive to nationalise the coal mines and the railways. But in isolation we shall not manage to bring about a decisive shift in the balance of class power in our country—if that is our aim. Our fate is inextricably linked with that of our continental neighbours, and no less certainly with that of India. We must move all together, if we move at all. Socialism, as we understand it, has a future, if we can recover the international consciousness we seem to have lost since Arthur Henderson died. Failing that recovery, the leadership will go to others, whose values are not ours.

H. N. BRAILSFORD.



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“Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
But to be young was very Heaven! . . .  
I had approached, like other youths, the shield  
Of human nature from the golden side,  
And would have fought even to the death, to attest  
The quality of the metal which I saw. . . .

I began  
To meditate with ardour on the rule  
And management of nations, what it is  
And ought to be; and strove to learn how far  
Their power or weakness, wealth and poverty,  
Their happiness or misery, depends  
Upon their laws, and fashion of the State.”

—Wordsworth.

“It is precisely because we believe that opinion, and nothing but opinion, can effect great permanent changes, that we ought to be careful to keep this most potent force honest, wholesome, fearless and independent.”

—John Morley, *On Compromise*.

“An opinion gravely professed by a man with sense and education demands always respectful consideration—demands and receives it from those whose own sense and education give them a correlative right; and whoever offends against this sort of courtesy may fairly be deemed to have forfeited the privileges it secures.”

—Isaac Taylor, *Natural History of Enthusiasm*.



# PART I

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY

"The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said: 'Ask what I shall give thee.' And Solomon said: '. . . Give thy servant an understanding heart.' . . . And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him: 'Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before thee . . .'"—I. Kings iii. 5-13.

VIENNA, IN which I was born in 1891, resembled in many ways Imperial Rome of the fourth century. Like fourth-century Rome, it still retained the lustre of the capital of an old, sometimes even powerful empire. But the Hapsburg Empire of the end of the nineteenth century, like the Roman Empire of the fourth, had passed through bewildering processes of disintegration for almost a hundred years. As the towers and temples, the statues, trophies and triumphal arches in fourth-century Rome boasted a greatness whose political substance had vanished long ago, so a plethora of Baroque palaces, Gothic churches and magnificent monuments of art and history, and even the very rhythm of life in Vienna proclaimed an imperial vigour which had been dissipated long ago.

Through the tiny stratum of the German, Hungarian, Polish and Czech aristocracy, which ruled the Hapsburg Dual Monarchy, glimmered, perhaps, a foreboding of their impending doom. But they fully enjoyed the splendour of their station and privilege and appeared to be entirely without apprehension of the future. The middle classes seemed even less aware of the writing on the wall. The process of large-scale industrialisation began in Austria more than half a century later than in England. The 'sixties and early 'seventies were called the *Gründerjahre*, the years of the birth of a host of industrial enterprises. Trade was expanding vastly; the accumulated wealth, produced by the toil of hard-pressed peasants and workers of ten or twelve nations, poured into Vienna, and was there displayed with ostentatious luxury in theatres, the

famous Court Opera, ballrooms and particularly in the stately mansions, newly built in the quarters around the Imperial castle. Vienna became the banking and trade centre not only of the Hapsburg Empire, which included some fifty million people, but of the whole of the Balkans beyond it. The middle classes were prosperous and in a rather sanguine mood. Although less than a quarter of a century later this big Empire was to crash in ruins, they behaved, like the nobility, as if it were built on the rocks of eternity. Henri Pirenne observed about the spirit and temper of fourth-century Rome: "It was as though the very mind of man were suffering from degeneration; pessimism and discouragement were universal." \* The same cannot be said about the mental disposition of the Austrian middle classes until the very moment when the flood rose to engulf them.

Vienna was, in my youth, a true cosmopolis. It was the largest labour market of East and South Europe, and in their tens of thousands Czechs and Croats, Italians and Hungarians, Poles, Slovenes, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Roumanians and Jews from Bohemia, Moravia, Hungary, but mainly from Galicia and Russia, streamed into the city. Apart from the Jews, only the Czechs settled in big numbers, mostly as solid artisans, greatly esteemed for their skill and industry and good-humouredly derided for their foreign accent; not a few of them became distinguished civil servants, teachers and scholars.

However, although the Slav, Italian, and Hungarian influx tinged the German-Catholic pattern of life in Vienna, it received its strongest imprint from the Jewish influx. It would certainly be a gross exaggeration to say that Vienna was ever a "Jewish city"; it was one of the finest German cities, with a rich heritage of German culture, strongly moulded in music and architecture by Italian influence; only one in ten of its population was of Jewish descent. Yet though the Jewish population of Vienna was comparatively small in numbers—about 200,000 out of two millions—the Jewish thread in the economic, social and, above all, the spiritual fabric of Vienna was very conspicuous, perhaps even more than in the fabric of New York or Warsaw with proportionately far bigger Jewish populations (one quarter of the total population in the first, and almost one-third in the second of those two cities). At any rate, the Jews achieved in Vienna greater eminence, for good and for evil, than anywhere else in Europe, an eminence in all walks of economic life, and in letters, science, music, and especially in the Socialist movement. In the invigorating air of this remarkable cosmopolis, where the culture of the European West met with that of the European East and

\* Henri Pirenne, *Mohomed and Charlemagne*, p. 118.

blended with it, the Jewish talent blossomed as vigorously as it did in Granada under Moslem rule. The old-world culture which they had retained and developed in the medieval setting of Eastern Europe underwent amazing processes of metamorphosis in Vienna, processes in the course of which the Jews themselves changed in mind and behaviour and in turn influenced their new environment perceptibly. The peculiar character of the Austrian Labour movement—for example, its astonishing blend of enthusiastic Messianism and sober Fabianism, of revolutionary Marxism and reformist Trade Unionism—was produced, in the first place, by particular historic conditions; but it was also the result of the blending of the German and Jewish elements which composed it.

The metamorphosis of the Jews in their new environment and their reciprocal effects upon the social and spiritual life of the Viennese are clearly discernible in the story of two Jewish generations, as exemplified in the life-story of my father and myself.

My father had migrated from the East to Vienna. He was born in Brody, a small town in Galicia at the Austro-Russian frontier of those days. His father made a modest living there as a “banker” behind a tiny desk on the market-place, exchanging Rubles for Guldens and Guldens for Rubles when the travellers and merchants passed in their coaches on their way from Moscow or Warsaw to Vienna and vice versa. Acquiring the art of an accountant in his father’s business, my father, after spending a few years in Odessa as an accountant of a small banking firm, went in the ‘fifties, still a young man, to Vienna when his firm moved thither. He remained with this firm, a modest but solid “Family Bank”, confined to the administration of the deposits of a few clients, for more than forty years; it was the only job he ever had.

My father was a profoundly religious man who found in his creed the absolute fulfilment of the purpose of his life. The secular world of politics, power, business and wealth lay beyond his ambitions and even his interests; it hardly entered the compass of his mind. I never saw him touch a newspaper; he never attended a public meeting. However, when I was still a boy of twelve (the third child of his second marriage), he had at sixty-six the appearance, and perhaps the wisdom, of a patriarch. He was not as picturesque, to be sure, as Rembrandt’s Rabbis, because he used to wear a black top-hat and not a fur beret. But his large features, strong, bushy eyebrows, wistful eyes, powerful forehead marked by deep wrinkles, his snow-white hair and whiskers and a big silver-grey beard framing his high-cheekboned face, composed a countenance familiar from Rembrandt’s immortal paintings of those so “well versed in suffering, and in sor-

row deeply skilled". At any rate, my father's bearing had the dignified serenity of a patriarch and, also, his aloofness from the affairs of the world. He read French as well as Hebrew, German and Yiddish; but on his small bookshelf were, apart from the Bible, a few prayer-books and some text-books of mathematics and stenography, only the works of two authors: Molière and Lessing. He venerated Lessing for his humanism and his tolerance towards the Jews; but his favourite author was Molière. His delightful plays, especially *Tartuffe*, the *Ecole des Femmes*, and, of course, the *Avaré* and the *Misanthrope*, appeared to my father as the quintessence of human wisdom and sagacity. He never tired of re-reading them and once more rejoicing in Molière's sallies of wit and his sarcastic exposure of human follies, vice and hypocrisy. He never missed an appropriate occasion to cite passages from Molière, almost as often as from the Bible. He regarded men's striving for wealth, fame and power as utterly vain and pointless, and for politics he entertained only an abysmal contempt. The world appeared to him, as to Thackeray, as a vast vanity fair, not worth while bothering about.

However, it might be that when he was younger he watched the course of things with keener interest than in my days. He witnessed the great changes in the world from the revolution in 1848 up to the eve of the First World War. He often told me how when he was eleven he had watched the Cossacks riding through his native town on their way to Hungary to crush Kossuth's revolution; how he had seen the Imperial troops returning to Vienna from the battle of Solferino, where Austria lost Lombardy, and from the battle of Sadova, where Austria lost Venice and was expelled from the German Reich. He also used to tell me how much he was impressed at one and the same time by both Gladstone and Disraeli, the first for his humanity and the second because he was a Jew. But the unvarying moral he drew from his political reminiscences was that all these goings-on were in vain, particularly if attempted by Jews. The Jews, he would say, are a people apart, and a peculiar people at that, and should not meddle in the affairs of other peoples.

He was, indeed, perfectly satisfied with the testimony of the Scripture that his people were chosen by the Lord for some great purpose. When he spoke about the destiny of the Jewish people—and this subject was dear to him—he used to speak with the same composure as Wordsworth displayed when describing the English:

" . . . In every thing we are sprung  
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold".

My father very often cited the Second Psalm: "I shall give thee

the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost ends of the earth for thy possession". But he seemed not the slightest bit pleased with this glorious prospect; in fact he was rather frightened by it. Firstly, he felt the burden of responsibility which this promise involves a little too heavy for the poor, wretched Jews, as they appeared to him; and secondly, he detested in the depths of his heart the mere idea of domination of men by men. All his being was a living protest against the tenet that the "chosen" are to be by nature the masters of those who have unfortunately not been tapped by the finger of God. In the American Civil War, which he observed from afar, his sympathies were naturally with the North, as the liberator of the Negro slaves. He never read Aristotle and did not know that the Philosopher of Stagira regarded rather the Greeks, and by no means the Jews, as the chosen people, and as such entitled to subject and enslave the alien nations; but such a theory would have appeared to my father most disgraceful, and he would have loathed Euripides' line, in his *Iphigenia in Aulis*:

"It is meet  
That Greece should o'er Barbarians bear the sway,  
Not that Barbarians lord it over Greece;  
Nature hath formed them slaves, the Grecians free."

My father was, also, only dimly aware that almost every nation—or at any rate many of their intellectual leaders—considered itself as "chosen" by Providence: the French, English, American, Russian, German, Spanish, Italian and Japanese, and that every one of them feels endowed with a "mission", and with the right, flowing from the "mission", to dominate other nations. My father would have rejected with indignation such pretensions. Milton's claim (in *Areopagitica*) that God has "revealed Himself . . . first to His Englishman", he would have regarded as a blasphemy. That, however, the Jews—and the Jews alone—were "chosen", and that there is a special relationship between God and the Jews, sealed by the Covenant, that was to him a matter of fact and beyond any question, as anyone could clearly read it in the Scriptures, which were to him in every single word the final truth.

This conviction was uppermost in my father's mind. It impressed me deeply. When pondering in mature years my father's belief that the Jews were the élite of the earth, I wondered whether this creed might not, partly, explain the miracle of the Jewish people's survival through twenty or thirty centuries of oppression, persecution and detestation. Those who have been treated as inferiors might have found exceptional strength in the assumption of being superior. My father dwelt often upon the story of the Jewish people, especially on Passover eve. On that night we

children sat in high spirits round the candle-lit table, covered with a snow-white cloth, in front of a big plate with bitter herbs and salt water, "because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our ancestors in Egypt with hard work, in mortar and brick, and in all manner of labour in the field". After my mother had blessed the lights and my father had spoken his prayer, I had to read the *Haggadah*, in which the story of the Jewish people's exodus from Egypt is told. My father, wearing a gold-embroidered cap of scarlet velvet and wrapped in the ritual shawl with golden hem, would listen attentively, though he knew every word of it by heart, and would then meditate on the strange fate of the Jewish people: how, after being delivered from the bondage of the Pharaohs, centuries before the fall of Troy, they passed through one ordeal after the other—the massacres by the Assyrians, the Babylon captivity, the destruction of the Temple by Titus, the dispersal of the Jewish people all over the globe, and through all the misery they have endured until our time. "Yet still," he would add pensively, but with a somehow triumphant ring in his voice: "what became of the temples and pyramids of the Pharaohs? They are buried in the sand of the desert. What became of proud Nineveh and Tyre? What of the Spanish Empire? All of them have been smitten. But we are still alive, and always shall be." All the great trials of Judea were as present in my father's mind as if they had occurred the day before yesterday, and not hundreds and even thousands of years ago. The exodus from Egypt which modern archaeology believes to have been at about 1300 B.C. was to my father as much a living reality as is the destruction of the Spanish Armada to the English people. The ghosts of Rameses II and Cyrus, of Nebuchadnezzar, Pompey, Ferdinand the Catholic and many more of the great hunters of the Jews haunted his memory, and that they had perished while Israel survived was to him the unanswerable proof of Israel's chosen destiny.

My father's mind was almost entirely encompassed by the past; it was perhaps also a little concerned with a very remote future when the Messianic promise may be realised. The present, however, had hardly any meaning for him, except to live humbly in the fear of God.

There is a passage in the *Haggadah* which always moved me to tears when I had to read it. The Passover rite requires that the youngest son interrogate the father: "Wherefore is this night distinguished from all other nights? All other nights we eat and drink sitting, but on this night we all of us lean." And the father has to answer: "Because we were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord, our God, brought us forth thence with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. . . ." Only on this night, when

commemorating Israel's liberation, did my father feel himself a free man, entitled to lean upon the back of his chair; in everyday life he felt not quite free, but living in a strange country with alien masters. And he would declaim the prescribed line of the *Haggadah*: "This year we are bondsmen, but next year we hope to be free men in the land of Israel." I had to open the door of our flat and leave it ajar, so that if Elijah should appear to herald the coming of the Messiah on his mission of final deliverance of the Jewish people, bringing them back to Palestine, he should be saved the trouble of knocking at the door; he would be able to enter the room to tell us to get ready and to go. Once again, as every year, my father would explain the deeper meaning of this custom, and then delight in Isaiah's prophecy which shall be fulfilled once the Jewish people have returned to the land of their forbears: "And they shall build houses, and inhabit them," he would solemnly recite; "and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall enjoy the work of their hands. . . ."

Yet although my father's imagination seemed to be absorbed by Messianic expectation and showed not much interest in the present vale of tears, he was by no means a gloomy Puritan. He was of a reserved and taciturn temper, but he loved life and enjoyed it fully in his own quiet way. There was never abundance in our house. My father had a rather meagre income—360 Kronen a month, which was equivalent to £15 sterling—on which a family of eight had to live. At the age of sixty he had to retire on half of his salary, while his six children were still too young to earn anything. We lived in a small backyard flat of two dark rooms into which a ray of sun never entered. My mother worked miracles, not only in feeding eight healthy stomachs, but even in caring for the educational needs of the family, and, above all, for my father's humble hobbies; for my father was venerated by his children, and profoundly respected by my mother, as the "master of the house". He was rather fond of good food; he did not smoke, but at home he occasionally helped himself to a tiny-glass of cheap wine or brandy. He liked to play chess, and all the members of the family were his pupils, with whom he played in turn. He liked to read, but, as I have said, always the same authors: the good old faithfuls, Molière and Lessing, and some novels in shorthand print. What he loved most was music, particularly the Romantics. He hated Richard Wagner for his anti-Semitism (for my father viewed everything in the world from the Jewish viewpoint and was extremely sensitive in matters touching Jewish



feelings); he never could forgive Wagner for having written the pamphlet *Das Judentum in der Musik*; but he missed hardly any performance of his operas, however difficult it was to spare the 40 Kreutzer (about 9d.) for the ticket. I think he attended the *Ring*, *Die Meistersinger* and *Lohengrin* at least two hundred times. He knew Wagner's operas by heart, and after supper, consisting of bread and butter and five or six glasses of light tea, Russian style, he often sang lengthy passages from them. He beat time with his forefingers on the table, and the huge brass samovar whistled the obbligate. Then, suddenly remembering that he ought to hate Wagner, he would stop singing and with the utmost disdain exclaim: "And such a noise Wagner calls music!" He would instantly change over to passages from Meyerbeer's *Prophet* or Goldmark's, *The Queen of Sheba* and mutter afterwards: "This delightful music Wagner has called 'Jewish music'." My father was surely sensitive enough to feel that Wagner was superior to Meyerbeer and Goldmark; indeed, he felt it, and let himself willingly fall a prey to Wagner. The attendant of the fourth balcony of the Court Opera knew it also, for he knew from the experience of years that unfailingly at every Wagner performance an old man would climb up the big staircase to his regular place; he would find his seat kept for him on the bench by the wall. There my father sat in a trance for hours, forgetting the pivot round which the secular world rotated: his Jewish consciousness. The temptation of music seduced him rather frequently to the sin of attending even performances of Christian sacred music like Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, Verdi's *Requiem* and Handel's *Messiah*, though in his own house he regarded it as an unforgivable transgression even to pronounce the name of Jesus.

However, music was the only domain of life in which my father personally indulged in any measure of tolerance. He was, to be sure, not orthodox, at any rate not according to the standards of the Ghetto. He attended the service in a "reformed" synagogue, the Seitenstättentempel (which the Nazis have burned to ashes); and he could see no sense in certain extravagant rites strictly observed by those of his co-religionists whom my father called Zealots. He conformed as scrupulously as possible to all ordinances of the Pentateuch as custom and tradition have developed. He said a prayer every morning, of course, adjusting the phylacteries with great ceremony; he also said his prayer at sunset and whenever he broke bread; he never missed a service in the synagogue on Friday night and on Saturday morning. He kept the Sabbath and every Jewish festival most faithfully.

But although he was firm in his creed and in the observation of the Mosaic Law, he was rather tolerant towards his children.

He insisted that I should not fail to attend to my religious duties, at any rate until my thirteenth birthday (at which date, according to the Jewish law, a boy attains his majority). But when, on the very day after my thirteenth birthday, I stopped saying my prayers, he never reproved me. Nor did he later object to my eagerness to acquire something of western European civilisation. He probably felt that it was the search for knowledge, and not a mean attempt to escape the social imprint of Judaism, which led me on the road to assimilation. He objected to and resisted assimilation for himself, not only for reasons of his religious creed, but out of self-respect and a feeling of national solidarity. Nothing appeared to him more contemptible than to desert one's own people in distress and to buy social advantage at the price of embracing the Church; and he was most suspicious of conversions allegedly performed from an "inner urge". But he respected other people's opinions if he was satisfied with their sincerity.

My father's upbringing was very humble. The only school he attended was the Talmud School in his native town. However, by self-education he acquired a certain degree of knowledge in curiously limited spheres. He studied mathematics for many years; but one day he suddenly dropped it in order to devote all his spare time to the comparative study of four or five systems of—stenography! He himself wrote shorthand with the same speed as a medieval monk painting precious illuminations on parchment. But my father was never in a hurry. He did not study shorthand in order to save time, but for the intellectual pleasure of weighing sagaciously the advantages and the merits of the different systems. Just for this strange pleasure he used to read novels of Dumas and Eugen Sue printed in French stenography. In later years he bitterly regretted having wasted so much time on stenography instead of proceeding with his study of mathematics, because, as he said: "Perhaps I would have learnt something of great truth". But while I looked with awe at my father when he said that, I could never gauge the real meaning of his words, for it appeared that to him the cosmogony of Genesis was beyond discussion and he seemed to be deeply afraid of touching any subject which could arouse doubts and qualms in even a letter of the Pentateuch.

For my father the Pentateuch was the fountain-head of moral truth. It was the conceptions of mercy, pity and justice which moved him most. He would skirt round some of the stories in the Bible which, from an ethical point of view, were less edifying, and when I maliciously asked him about the cruelties and wickedness indicated in those stories he would show signs of embarrassment and explain that the true meaning of the Bible

is not revealed to everyone, and that at any rate sins, by whom-ever committed, have been terribly avenged by the Lord in father, son and all the generations up to our own. To my father even Hitler would have appeared as a "scourge of God", like Cyrus, Sargon or Czar Nicholas II, punishing the Jewish people for their sins in past and present.

The essence of the ethics which my father derived from the Bible was very simple. As he often explained in the words of Zechariah, it was plainly this: "Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassion, every man to his brother; and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor." My father traced some of the Mosaic laws of diet, which appeared to me most strange, from a sentiment of compassion. For example, on Moses' command not to boil the kid in its mother's milk, he reflected that such a cruel procedure must be most revolting to every human feeling; therefore, it is wrong. If man must eat meat, he should do it in a human way and not like a wild beast.

In my father's religious contemplations there was hardly a vestige of metaphysics or philosophical thought. He conceived the Old Testament with the simple-mindedness of a righteous man who has been transplanted from a spiritually medieval environment into the Babel of our time. Thus the Bible became his refuge and sanctuary; he tried hard all his life to live up to it as far as was humanly possible. He died, at the age of almost eighty years, a few months before the beginning of the deluge in A.D. 1914.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE AWAKENING

"When I laid down the last volume of (Dumont's) *Traite*, I became a different being. . . . It gave unity to my conceptions of things. I now had opinions; a creed, a philosophy; in one of the best senses of the word, a religion; the inculcation and diffusion of which could be made the principal outward purpose of a life."—John Stuart Mill, *Autobiography*.

HOWEVER WELL-MEANING my father was, his way of life weighed upon my soul like a huge boulder upon the roots of a tender tree. In later life my childhood appeared to me as shadowy as the room in which I grew up. My father, naturally wishing to see me educated in his spirit and tradition, sent me, at the age of six, to a Torah school instead of to the ordinary elementary school. I

remember vividly how my mother escorted me there, bearing a blue-wrapped packet of candle-lights as an offering, in the vague hope that it might help me make good; neither my father's nor mother's estimate of my intellect was exceedingly high. In fact, my parents regarded me as a little stupid and dull, and utterly lacking in that quick apprehension which, they believed, distinguishes the Jewish intellect. As a matter of fact, in my case both mind and senses matured very slowly.

The Jewish school which I attended for four years still inhabits an obscure chamber of my memory, as a nightmare. There, in an untidy, stuffy room, were packed more than fifty boys. In addition to the usual curriculum, we were drilled in Hebrew for two hours a day. My father thought that it might further improve my religious education as well as my musical sense if I also joined a synagogue choir. So he sent me to the choir of the Seitenstättentempel. The master of the choir was then Professor Joseph Sulzer, a cellist of the illustrious Viennese Philharmonic Orchestra, and son of Salomon Sulzer, who was the first to compose and introduce liturgical music into the reformed Jewish service. It was an obsession with Professor Sulzer to produce perfect performances of his father's works. He was mercilessly exacting; he rehearsed every chant untiringly, shouting and beating our fingers and heads with his baton when we failed him. He never allowed us wretched, ill-fed children a moment's rest, though there was always a shadow of pity in his big eyes when, entirely exhausted, he dismissed us at long last. Every day, except Saturday and Sunday, we had musical exercises from half-past twelve to half-past one and from five to seven.

My day went something like this: I left home for school at 7.30 in the morning, attended it until 12, went from the school to the "Tempel", munching sandwiches on the way, returned from there to the school, and went from there straight to the "Tempel" again. I arrived home shortly before eight in the evening. We choir-boys had to be present at the evening service on Fridays, four services from early morning till evening on Saturdays and several marriage services on Sundays. Once we had to sing at a concert of Salomon Sulzer's works in a big concert-hall; another time our choir was employed as the Chorus of Angels in the performance of Goethe's *Faust* at the Deutsches Volkstheater. The innumerable rehearsals for both the performances seemed a sheer torture to me. Still, we were better off than the choir-boys in the eighteenth-century musical academies of Naples, in which orphans and deserted children picked up from the streets were trained for the musical praise of God. Unlike them, we did not have to exercise from two hours before dawn until bed-time, as described by

Burney\* after his visit to the choir school of the College of San Onofrio at Capuana; we were also lucky not to be castrated in order to preserve the infantile timbre of our voices, as were our eighteenth-century colleagues of the Christian branch. But, frankly, sometimes I felt myself as much a martyr and outcast as the choir-boys of San Onofrio.

However, there were rewards. Firstly, it was, for a time at any rate, an exciting experience for a small boy to stand before the altar, clad in a cassock, and play a part in the conduct of a religious ceremony. I was an insider, so to speak, at all the rites: I was there when the velvet curtains were drawn from the shrine, the gilded doors opened and the sacred scrolls, wrapped in gold-embroidered silk and velvet and covered with tiny silver bells, carried in solemn procession to the holy table. Secondly, whereas I had to sing solely for the greater glory of God during the first year of my apprenticeship, later I received a monthly salary of 8 Kronen (about 6s. 6d.). I cannot forget how moved my mother was when I brought her my first earned money; it was, however small, a welcome contribution to the upkeep of the family.

I also believe that these five years of musical training under the able tutelage of Professor Sulzer refined and deepened my musical sense. Music has remained all through my life a source of bliss and an ever-increasing revelation of the human spirit. It is easy for me to understand Samuel Pepys' remark† about the power of music on his soul, and that he could not sleep the night after attending a performance of Massinger's *Virtuous Martyr*. Only, with me, it usually happens before. Often the anticipation of the second movement of Beethoven's *Violin Concerto* or the *Benedictus* in *Missa Solemnis* deprives me of sleep for one or two nights preceding its performance. I became particularly fond of oratorio, the choral song and organ music, undoubtedly owing to my sound but enervating training in a choir.

But at the same time my intimacy with the machinery of the "Tempel" produced less edifying impressions. Ever since my earliest childhood, when my father led me by the hand as a boy of three or four, I used to enter the House of God with awe and piety; every corner of it appeared to me holy, and the Rabbi, the cantor and the singers seemed to me to be devoted servants of the Lord. But the shining halo which appeared to surround this sanctified place grew fainter the longer I served it. The vestry in which the members of the choir, young and old, dressed and assembled before walking in procession to the altar, was a pretty unholy place, reverberating with the shrieks and vilifica-

\* Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, 1771.

† Samuel Pepys, *Diary* (entry, February 27, 1668), vol. VII, p. 320.

tions of never-ending quarrels. Most of the people called on to perform the solemn ceremonies seemed to be by no means saintly. Whenever I attended a service in later years and watched the chaste choir-boys, sitting most piously in the choir stalls, I wondered whether they also behaved a little less virtuously in the vestry than before the altar. Once I caught them *in flagrante delicto*. My wife and I entered the yard of the small church on the top of Fiesole near Florence just at the moment when the head of the procession of choir-boys, clad solemnly in a scarlet stole and white surplice, was stepping into the church while the other choir-boys were engaged in a terrific brawl. I roared with laughter, saying to my wife: "That, my dear, is a living portrait of my misspent youth!"

I became slowly disillusioned and even disgusted with my duties. They left me scarcely any time for play, for rest, for reading, or for home-work. There was hardly ever a day off. The parks and playgrounds were not for the likes of me. When I crossed the bridge over the river on my way from the school to the "Tempel", I often stopped to gaze longingly at the remote hills and woods of the Kahlenberg on the outskirts of the city; they were far beyond my reach. I was too tired even to follow the drone of the school teachers, so I lost all interest in the school. My aversion for school and "Tempel" thus ultimately engendered a veritable horror of everything connected with "Tempel", Bible and Hebrew. Although I attended the Hebrew school for four years and Bible lessons in a secular school for four more, and was a member of the synagogue choir for five years, I lost my knowledge of Hebrew completely soon after I left. At the age of eighteen I was already incapable of reading a single Hebrew letter.

The years of my childhood between nine and about thirteen were years of particular hardships for my family. No matter how much my mother skimped and scraped, it became increasingly difficult for her to keep house for eight on about £7 10s. a month. She tried to earn a little money covering umbrellas, the work she had done before she was married. She worked hard, often until midnight, but the financial result was extremely small. She also tried to augment our fortunes by taking in laundry; but instead of making money she lost her last farthing of savings from better days.

In her first enterprise my younger brother and I had to help her in fetching the umbrella-frames from, and delivering the covered umbrellas to, the firm for which my mother worked. Later we had to deliver the laundry to the customers. Sometimes we had to carry a weight of thirty and more pounds on our slender shoulders. However, the worst was that this small help which I rendered my

harassed mother took away any hope of spare time which school and Tempel left.

I attended school until my fourteenth birthday, having persuaded my father to permit me to attend an ordinary elementary school for the last four years of my school-age. He also consented to let me quit the choir on my thirteenth birthday. Life became a little easier for me, and also for my family, for my eldest sister began earning money. By a coincidence, school, too, suddenly revealed to me some more attractive features. Hitherto the only gain I had got from the elementary school was a knowledge of the "three R's". All the cosmogony we were taught was that of Genesis; though I knew it by heart, I never had the feeling of being enlightened or stimulated. In botany we were taught Linnaeus' system of nomenclature; it bored me to death. In zoology we learned to distinguish between an ass and a zebra; but even with such revelations this branch of science failed to inspire me.

But it happened that one day a master in history, named Leopold Hofer, turned up, who possessed the rare gift of awakening the "historical sense" in his pupils. He himself appeared to be enthusiastic about history in Goethe's sense. When he lectured, he spoke quickly and passionately, his eyes shone, and even his long red beard seemed to glow. The Grecian law-givers Solon, Pisistratus, Cleisthenes and Pericles, grew in his narrations into superhuman beings; their struggles for the poor against the rich, for democracy against tyranny, were unfolded with a breathtaking dramatic tension; the battles of Marathon and Salamis became in his vivid descriptions pieces of a glorious heroic epos for all humanity, because they were, as he always emphasised, fights for freedom against tyranny. When he explained the miracle of the Hellenes' victory over the hundredfold more powerful Persians, he explained it in the Aeschylus version. He told how the Queen-Mother of Persia asked about the strange Western people against whom her son Xerxes was fighting: "Who is the lord and shepherd of their flock?"; and how she was answered: "They are no slaves; they bow to no man's rule." And when he told how from the rugged crags and stony ravines of the Acropolis august Doric columns of Pelasgian marble arose, and how statues and temples, and the Propylaea, and the Parthenon with its friezes carved by Phidias, were built, he said at the end: "You see, beauty is the reward of freedom."

He touched a chord in my soul of which I had known nothing before. It was in his lectures on ancient Greece that, perhaps for the first time, I heard, or at any rate became conscious, of the word "beauty". He spoke often about the beauty of the Grecian landscape, emerging steeply from the foaming, purple-blue sea, the



fields scarlet with roses, interspersed with orchards and wild vines—a country, as Homer sang, “rough, but a mother of men, and the sweetest land to me”. He awakened a longing in me to see all those wonderful things—to see “beauty”. He spoke of the beauty of the Hellenic people, and once he showed us some photographs of classic Grecian sculptures. He spoke about the beauty of mind and manners of the Greek people, gallant and gentle, free and happy, and he made me long to live like the ancient Greeks—to live “beautifully”. Many years had to pass, years of reading Greek history and Greek classics, before I became aware of a deeper meaning of beauty. It was as Plato said in one of his noble passages in the *Symposium*: “The love of man rises as upon stepping-stones, from beautiful bodies to beautiful institutions and from beautiful institutions to beautiful ideas, until from beautiful ideas it attains the idea of absolute beauty and at last knows what the essence of beauty is: this, my dear Socrates, is the life above all others which man should live”. This conception of beauty was, of course, beyond the perception of small boys. But certainly it was Leopold Hofer’s talks which awakened my sense of beauty and my yearning for “beautiful ideas” and for “beautiful institutions”, which I tried to help materialise all my life.

It was perhaps also due to his teachings that there dawned in me a very vague and melancholic feeling that life has a purpose and that I was missing it. Until these lessons on history, I was a rather dull and aimless boy; now I became restless, searching for an aim. I began reading, preferably stories with an historic background, or books on history. I had rather quixotic day-dreams of a heroic life in the service of a “cause”. For weeks and weeks when strolling lonely through the streets I dreamt how wonderful it might be to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem. I would not build it, as King Solomon did, of Lebanon cedar; I would rather see it built in marble. The gigantic foundation on the summit of the holy mountain should be of white marble, and from the foundation should rise a forest of three hundred noble columns in three rows in front and two hundred columns in one row on each side, bearing a huge dome of transparent blue crystal. Twenty-one wide steps should lead to the doors of pure gold. I imagined that this Temple of my choice would surely be far more beautiful than the Greek temple in the Ringstrasse in which the Austrian Parliament was housed. I also fancied that Michael Angelo’s Moses, a photographic reproduction of which I had seen in the window of the Hebrew bookshop opposite the Seitenstättentempel, would have to be brought to Jerusalem and mounted at the left of the main door of the Temple. Then, of course, the High Priest ought to have a guard, clad in purple and gold lace, just like the guard

of the Emperor which I often saw marching near the Imperial Castle. And then there ought to be a corps mounted on white horses with gilded saddles and harness, and I would like nothing better than to serve in it. The Jewish people would inhabit Canaan and live in peace beneath their vines and fig trees. . . . Day-dreams of this kind stayed with me for a long time, and I was very reluctant to part with them.

I was impatient to leave school, and in fact I left it in the middle of the term, on my fourteenth birthday, when according to law my school-age expired.

Months before I left I had definitely made up my mind, with the approval of my father, not to go into business or into an office. I disliked the idea of rushing to and fro behind the counter serving customers, and the idea of spending my life adding up figures, which I was never any good at anyway, made me shudder. Nor did I have much respect for the white-collar boys, smelling of the pomade with which they anointed their brain-proof heads. They appeared to have learned nothing, and were somehow lost in life. Besides, no one was actually more exploited than they, because while the hours for the industrial workers were fixed by trade-union contracts, for the clerks there was no end of work. In my youth the food-shops opened at six in the morning and never closed before nine in the evening. Other retailers opened at eight and also kept open until about nine. For the clerks there was no escape from this drab life, unless they succeeded in going into business on their own; but such a prospect was not to my liking. I wanted to learn a solid trade which, so I dreamt, would open the gates to a world of "beauty", freedom and adventure. Without losing a single day—because I was in a terrible hurry—I went to the owner of a book-binding factory and asked him to take me on as an apprentice. This gentleman, somehow related to my family, was a notorious slave-driver; though I knew it, and knew also, that he would exploit me more than a stranger just because he knew me, I did not mind. I had to serve as an apprentice for three and a half years instead of the three that my colleagues served.

In this factory, a modern concrete building with big windows, about thirty workmen, sixty women and girls, and five apprentices (of whom I was the youngest), were employed in producing all sorts of things, apart from a little actual bookbinding. We made portfolios in gilded leather, photo-albums bound in velvet, silk or leather, notebooks, calendars, fancy boxes and big heavy account-books. I learned in turn every branch of the trade, and enjoyed it very much, in particular the gilding of leather and silk. It was a delight to me to adorn soft white, green or scarlet leather

and heavy silk with ornaments, and I had the feeling that by so doing a little of beauty was added to the treasures of the world.

We had rather long hours. The adults in the shop worked fifty-four hours a week, we apprentices sixty-two and a half. We had to begin work in the morning and after lunch half an hour earlier than the workpeople, in order to provide them with material, and to stay half an hour after the workpeople had left, to clean the shop. In addition, for two or three months preceding Christmas all of us had to work another ten hours a week overtime. I began work at a weekly wage of 6 Kronen (5s.), which was raised every year by 2 Kronen; the skilled workers in my shop earned between 24 to 30 Kronen (£1 to £1 5s.), the women from 14 to 18 Kronen (12s. to 15s.).

But this life, hard as it might appear, pleased me extremely; I felt perfectly happy, perhaps for the first time in my young years, and this feeling of an inner happiness, the deeper satisfaction of serving some useful purpose, remained the key-note in all the sometimes bewildering vicissitudes of my life. For one thing, it was an entirely new experience for me to share the life of Gentiles. At the common elementary school which I attended for four years, Jewish and Christian boys were mixed, but there was always a marked anti-Semitic feeling, partly instigated by some of the teachers, who would occasionally drop a nasty word about "dirty Jews"; I kept, at any rate, to my Jewish classmates. In the shop there were no Jews, apart from myself and another worker; but I felt not the faintest antagonism of my shop-mates towards me. I did not speak with the soft, melodious Viennese accent and was (and still am) incapable of using its gay, witty slang. My language was rather the *Hochdeutsch* of my father, who spoke German as an acquired and not as a native tongue. Yet there was no discrimination against me and any appearance of hostility or even derision was absent; I was accepted by all of them—labourers and apprentices alike—as their mate, and was treated on the whole very kindly.

One of my colleagues, a year older than myself, became a lifetime friend. Anton Bönisch came from an old family of typical Viennese artisans. His father had a small workshop beneath his tiny flat in an old house in Mariahilf. There he produced, without any help, the wooden frames for ladies' fans, as his father and his grandfather had done since the time of the Empress Maria Theresia. Anton was a good-humoured, most sincere lad with a boundless love for mountains. He taught me mountain-climbing in all its dizzy phases. Very often on Saturday evenings we would take the cheap night train for mountaineers, arriving shortly after midnight at Reichenstein (in the Eastern

Alps). Carrying heavy rucksacks on our shoulders, with food, woollen things and something to read, we would ramble for three or four hours to Kaiserbach at the entrance of the *Grosse Höllentor* ("Great Gate of Hell"). Still in the twilight of dawn, through a forest of giant silver firs, we would climb the ridges, emerging from the gorge to the crag of the Rax, a rocky, 6000-foot mountain. When we reached the peak in the first rays of the sun, the chasm beneath us would still be filled with billows of a sea of white clouds above which the summits of the hills towered. What an enchanting sight! So a little more of my longing for beauty was fulfilled.

However, though I felt entirely at home with the Gentile workers in my shop, I often met, mostly by chance, my old classmates from the Torah school. Once when I saw one of them in the street, he told me that he had joined a Zionist youth group. I had never heard about Zionists before, and I was deeply impressed with all he told me about their aims. This was at a time when my Jewish feeling was strongly aroused. Czarist Russia was scourged by Jewish pogroms, and I had read, my blood boiling, how innocent Jews, men, women, and children, were slain and their homes pillaged. Of course, I immediately wanted to join the Zionists and to strain every nerve to help to bring the Jewish people back into the Promised Land without any further delay. I went with my friend to the Zionist club, registered on the spot and never thereafter missed a meeting. Eagerly I read every book on the Jewish problem I could get hold of, beginning with Herzl's *Judenstaat*. Zionism then appeared to me as the natural conclusion of the age-old history of the Jewish people, about which I had heard so much from my father, a conclusion which would bring a natural solution to their endless wanderings and sufferings. A Jewish Commonwealth would arise as beautiful as the Greek Commonwealth of my history teacher, Leopold Hofer. I was fascinated by this idea, and I did not doubt for a moment that the Messianic age was near at hand. Theodor Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement, who had died about six months before, became the first modern hero in the Pantheon of my heart; I bought a huge photographic print of him and framed it in pasteboard covered with black cloth. Yet I was not a little surprised, when arriving home with the framed picture, to learn from my father that it was not to remain in his house. "Surely the Jewish people will go back to Palestine one day," he said; "but they will be brought back by the mercy of God and by the Messiah, and not by Herrn Dr. Herzl of the *Neue Freie Presse*" (the Viennese paper for which Herzl was a correspondent). That was final.

At this time I also learned that there were even more formidable opponents of Zionism among the Jews than such interpreters of the Scripture as my father; they were the so-called assimilationists, who by no means desired to go back to Palestine; they wanted not only to stay in the lands in which they were born and whose culture they had acquired, but also to confine Judaism to a merely religious affair and to become otherwise indistinguishable from the Gentiles among whom they lived. I appreciated the attitude of my father and failed to understand the attitude of the assimilationists.

It was not long before I got into trouble with my Jewish consciousness. Just at the beginning of my Zionist career I made the acquaintance of a couple of brothers, Robert and Ernst Lackenbacher. They lived in my neighbourhood, near the greengrocer's shop of their parents, Hungarian Jews who had migrated from Budapest to Vienna. When I went to visit my friends I had the impression that they were, if not well-to-do, at least a little better off than my own family. The parents worked hard from early morning until nine in the evening; they had a serious, proper and rather gloomy appearance; I never saw them smile. They seemed to be absorbed by worries over how to provide the means of a good education for their two children. They led a Spartan life, and apparently did not care much for my frequent visits, and particularly my endless talks with the boys. They thought these chats took up time which the boys could better use studying.

Robert, though only two years older than I, surpassed me in mental maturity and knowledge by at least ten. He was the gravest lad I have ever met, circumspect in his manners, kind-hearted but unsentimental, learned as a scholar; and firm in his opinions on philosophical matters, literature and the theatre. Above all, his knowledge of political affairs simply overwhelmed me. Of course, I was still a blank; I had learned nothing, read nothing, and knew nothing.

It was from him that I learned for the first time about the Kant-Laplace cosmogony. He did not, to be sure, "lecture" on it; he was by no means a prig. One summer night, as we sat on a bench in a park, gazing at the dark canopy of the starry sky, he suddenly remarked how wonderful he thought the conception of the vast nebular cosmos from which after eons the stars emerged. And he quoted the first stanza of the Prologue in Heaven to *Faust* (beautiful without parallel, though unfortunately untranslatable):

Die Sonne tönt nach alter Weise  
In Brudersphären Wettgesang

Und ihre vorgeschriebne Reise  
Vollendet sie mit Donnergang.\*

Robert's remark made me suddenly aware that I had as yet never speculated on the miracle of the universe. My innocent childhood belief in the creation of the world out of the void by the Word of God, as described in the first nine chapters of the Pentateuch, had certainly lost some of its freshness; but it had never been challenged.

But now it *was* challenged. Now a conception of universal order and of a definite course of things arose from my countless heated discussions with Robert. This conception, the dominant idea of modern thought, did not trickle into my mind in imperceptible fractions; it came like a lightning flash, with thunder and storm. The Hebrew lore of the creation of the world had been instilled into my mind as a child of three or four. Perhaps I believed it until my discussions with Robert, when we pondered the great spectacle of world-creation. It was like a fantastic picture in miniature, as Milton painted it in the giant Baroque canvas of Book Seven, of *Paradise Lost* emerging from the phantasmagoria:

“ . . . the Son  
On his great expedition now appear'd  
Girt with omnipotence, with radiance crown'd  
Of Majesty divine, sapience and love  
Immense, and all his Father in him shone.  
About his chariot numberless were pour'd  
Cherub and Seraph, Potentates and Thrones. . . .  
They view'd the vast immeasurable abyss  
Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild. . . .  
He took a golden compasses, prepared  
In God's eternal store, to circumscribe  
This universe, and all created things. . . .  
And said, Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds,  
This be thy just circumference, O world.”

But now, Milton's “vast immeasurable abyss”, “circumscribed” by the Word of the Lord, was in my imagination transformed into the universe, object of an omnipresent agent, subject to eternal transmutations, penetrated by a medium of such a nature that a magnetic needle on the earth answers to an effervescence in the sun. Now the fascinating idea of the oneness of nature began to

\* There does not exist to my knowledge an English translation of Goethe's *Faust* which adequately conveys its sublime beauty and the profundity of its thought. In Bayard Taylor's standard translation the quoted stanza reads as follows:

The sun-orbit, in emulation  
'Mid brother-spheres; his ancient round;  
His path predestined through Creation.  
He ends with step of thunder-sound.

take shape in my consciousness; it filled my being with the grandeur of the universe, the microcosm with the macrocosm; it taught me "to know my brothers in air and water and the silent wood".

I became a voracious reader of books on the history and philosophy of nature. I began with Haeckel's *The Riddle of the World*, commonplace as it would appear to-day, revolutionary as it impressed my virgin mind then; Goethe's *Faust*, penetrated with the most profound thought, became my Bible; Schopenhauer's *Parerga and Paralipomena* became for its ludicity of style and its inspiring speculations on so many domains of life and thought a source of delight and reflection. Most of these books were certainly strange reading for me, boy as I was, and I could not possibly have understood a great deal of them. Apart from the intrinsic subtlety of the thought they expounded, the very language—the language of the educated—in which they were written was alien to me. My own vocabulary was still extremely poor and I had to struggle painfully to perceive merely the meaning of so many new words. Perhaps because I had no proper school education and had to learn the German of the educated at so late an age, the words began to weigh on my mind and frustrate my art of speaking. It was (and still is) more difficult for me to express my mind in the spoken word than in the written. The words did not flow from my mind; I had to search for them and to weigh them. This inhibition which I felt then has never left me. And after I thought I had at long last conquered the art of using the German language properly I had to pass through the same agony when I began, at the age of forty-five, to learn English.

The delicacy of language and thought eluded me then (as later when I had to read and to express myself in English). My mind was entirely untrained for spiritual matters. But all the stronger was my curiosity for these strange things. I attended popular evening lectures, arranged by the Viennese University, on astronomy, physics, philosophy and—*Faust*. I became a member of the Viennese Volksheim, a working-class university on a remarkably high level, founded by Professor Ludo Hartmann and Professor Emil Reich, at which university professors and lecturers used to teach. It was housed in a fine, modern building with big and small lecture-rooms, and had an excellent library, which I visited, searched and used with avidity.

From reflections on the nature of things Robert's discussions soon turned to the nature of society. Until these talks I had accepted the phenomenon of the class-divided society as I had accepted the Solar system: as instituted in the nature of things, irrevocable and

unchangeable. I had, of course, noted that in this world of ours there were poor and rich, overcrowded slums and beautiful palaces, hard-toiling workers in rags and well-dressed ladies and gentlemen enjoying their leisure with the good things of life.

One example of this social contrast which I had experienced remains as a special mark in my memory. Once, when I was nine or ten, I had to deliver laundry to a famous actress of the Viennese Burgtheater; she lived in a flat in one of the stately mansions behind the Town Hall. The laundry was not ready until late at night, and I had to take it to her without delay. It was icy cold when I went to her, carrying a heavy basket on my shoulders. When I entered the flat, I was startled by the glamour of the light-flooded big hall, its floor covered with a huge, thick carpet, the graceful furniture, the gilt-framed pictures on the walls; and how wonderfully the warmth of the room loosened the stiffness of my limbs. I glanced wonderingly and sadly at this strange, gorgeous world, so infinitely remote and different from the world in which I lived. Yet hardly a suspicion of envy crept into my soul; I accepted the presence of those two separate worlds as a given condition of nature. It never occurred to me to grumble about it.

Now Robert shed a new light on these two worlds. We lay on a slope of the Kahlenberg, looking down at Vienna as it spread beneath our feet along the double silver band of the Danube. Through the slight haze of this summer afternoon gleamed the spires and domes of hundreds of churches and thousands of roofs. It was an overwhelming sight. We tried to pick out the buildings. There was the huge spire of St. Stephan's Cathedral; not far away from it to the west we could clearly see the dome of the Karlskirche, with the two Trajan columns before it; and a little to the north there was the semicircular Imperial castle.

"Look how the whole city cowers beneath the Cathedral and the castle," Robert said. "You can distinguish only churches and palaces—the homes of the common people are just as amorphous and sordid as the two million poor who live there."

"Certainly, that is true in a sense," I answered; "but what does it mean?"

"It means that you are as incapable of seeing an inch beyond your nose as the rest of them," he exclaimed rather angrily. "Can you not realise the abysmal barbarity of this cleavage of human society which preserves the beauty for the few and condemns the many to squalor, half-starvation and ignorance?"

He paused for a moment, apparently waiting for my answer. But I had none; in fact I could really say nothing, because I had not spent a moment's thought on these things.



Robert went on: "What a confounded shame that, for instance, you, a boy hardly fifteen, have to work twelve hours a day in a stinking shop instead of sitting in a good school, enjoying the growth of your intelligence. What a disgrace before the eyes of God that health, comfort, knowledge and beauty are the privileges of a few, and that the many have to live in a jungle of poverty, sickness, filth and misery!"

"But, my dear Robert," I tried to calm him down a little, "perhaps that must be so because it was always so."

"It is only so," he said curtly, "because your sense of justice, humanity and dignity is as much blunted as that of most people. That's why."

This remark struck my heart. I believed, without much pondering about it, that I was not unfeeling for other people's sufferings; at any rate, I had joined the Zionists to end the sufferings of the Jewish people. However, Robert seemed to be right when he said I had not yet any feeling for other people, except the Jews. He was perhaps also right when he said I had no sense of dignity, if I was able to stomach injustice and to watch unmoved the abasement of human dignity all round. "Dignity!"—it is as beautiful a word as beauty itself; surely I had never had it in my vocabulary. Perhaps that is the reason, I reflected, why my sense of dignity might indeed be blunted; Robert was possibly right on this point. But what about justice? No one could say that I had no sense of justice. Heaven knows how sensitively I reacted to every act of injustice I came across. And yet it is true, I went on contemplating, that so far I had not even noticed the "great wrong" about which Robert spoke. But what is the use of a sense of dignity and justice if your mind is entangled in a maze and you can't see how to right the wrong?

"Can you see, Robert, *how* all this wrong about which you told me can be set right?" I asked him almost despondently.

Then he began to explain how boundless are nature's resources. Modern science and technique are able to produce such an abundance of all the good things of life that everyone could live out his life in health, comfort and dignity. But in this rotten society wealth is not produced for the happiness of all, but only for the leisure and luxury of the rich.

"But surely," I ventured to say in the vein of Master Pangloss teaching his devoted pupil Candide—"surely such things must somehow be in the natural conditions of life, otherwise how could they be?"

Robert, controlling his temper, now showed me that this state of things must not be, and will not remain for ever. The nature of modern society is by no means unchangeable; as everything in

nature is subject to eternal changes—the Solar system, the surface of the earth, the shores of the oceans and the flora and fauna—so also is human society. But while cosmic and terrestrial processes of change are imperceptible as they proceed in celestial time, processes of change in human society proceed with bewildering speed. Only a little more than a hundred years ago the French Revolution destroyed feudal society and inaugurated a bourgeois one.

"Your father," he said, "arrived in Vienna in a horse-drawn coach; now railway tracks span the whole globe. This invention alone has produced the most profound changes in the conditions of life and in the social structure of the human race.

"When your father was as young as you are to-day," he continued, "there was no working-class movement anywhere; to-day there are powerful working-class movements all over Europe. One day—and you will see that day—they will bring about the change in bourgeois society just as the French Revolution brought about the change in feudal society. And just as the bourgeois revolution displaced the power of the aristocracy by the power of the middle classes, so the proletarian revolution will displace the power of the middle classes by the power of the working classes. It will inaugurate a society in which everyone can enjoy the fullness of life."

It was for the first time that I heard, in Robert's talk, the words "class struggle", "revolution" and "Socialism". It was for the first time that the idea of the international brotherhood of the working-classes all over the world was unfolded before me. Robert spoke in no vague terms. He told me about the great German Labour movement, led by August Bebel; he told me about Jean Jaurès and Keir Hardie, and, of course, in the first place, about the Austrian Labour movement, founded by Victor Adler. He spoke about the Socialist International, embracing millions of workers in all countries, and about the increasing acuteness of the class struggle everywhere. And he spoke about the revolution not in the language of a visionary, but in a matter-of-fact way, as if it were an imminent event.

This was a powerful new note in my feelings and thoughts. "Revolution!"—what a challenging idea! There, almost in my vision, the hosts of the working-classes of every tongue and colour were gathering for the final assault against bourgeois society! The signal for the last battle had sounded! The working-classes were advancing, red flags like giant torches were leading the way, just as columns of clouds led Israel on the road to Canaan. The storm would break the last bastion of the rich, and an age would commence in which "they shall build homes and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them".

The day after this talk with Robert I went with him to register with the Association of the Working-Class Youth (the Socialist youth movement of Austria). It was just six months after I had left school that I believed I had found the ultimate "cause", in the service of which my life would gain singleness of purpose. I felt sorry for my Zionist friends whom I had deserted; but I hoped I would be able to persuade them one day to understand that the smaller aim has to give way to the bigger.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### FIRST MEETING WITH REALITY

"If science has taught us anything it is this, that in all human and reasonable probability we have more time in front of us than the anthropologists have shown that we have behind us; and I submit to you that it is not only practicable but wise to hold in front of our minds the goal to which we are travelling . . . not to lose sight of the New Jerusalem descending on Earth itself as something which may be realised, and to hold in mind that memorable saying of the Book of Proverbs: 'Where there is no vision, the people perish.'"—Lionel Curtis (*Lecture delivered at the Institute of Politics, Williamtown*).

IT WAS a great day in my life when I went with Robert to the Working-Class Youth Club to register. The night before I had pondered for a long time over the meaning of my decision to join. Robert and I had fully discussed its implications. It meant to me the firm resolve to help bring about nothing less than the New Jerusalem on earth in my own lifetime.

The boldness of this aim was certainly in proportion to the simplicity of my mind. I could not understand why it should seem Utopian.

When I told my father I was going to join the Socialist movement, and set out to explain what it was aiming at, he remarked with a twinkle in his eye: "Oh, I see, you're a world reformer. But beware. Most world reformers are hanged and the world remains exactly as it was."

"Does it?" I answered curtly, with an air of proud superiority in my recently acquired knowledge. I *did* know, which my father apparently did not, that all things were in process of eternal change.

For me the fact that the world was constantly changing was beyond any question. My problem was whether or not the time for the "final change" in human society had actually arrived.

I had learned from many discussions with Robert and from

books and lectures that myriads of years were needed for the boiling cosmic nebulae to materialise into the Solar system; for the nebular orb which became the earth to cool and condense; for it to develop organic life; and for *homo sapiens* to emerge from a more primitive form of life. I had learned that my early ancestor, the *Neanderthal Man*, had trod the earth fifty thousand years ago, and that his descendants had to struggle more than forty thousand years before they succeeded in creating the first civilisation. From Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* I had learned that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle", and I saw that it was possible to trace back the class struggle of the disinherited and oppressed for about six thousand years. And yet, mainly from Marx's *Manifesto* and Friedrich Engels' *Anti-Dühring*, which were among the first Socialist classics I had read, I believed that humanity had now entered the final stage of its history; that the whole preceding history of the human race from time immemorial to our days was the preliminary stage of evolution, and that now, for the first time in the life of the human race, the conditions for the emancipation of humanity from exploitation, poverty and ignorance were at hand.

I thought I understood why now, and not in an earlier period of history, the New Jerusalem could be materialised. Aristotle had already seen it clearly. "If every instrument could accomplish its own work," he said in his *Politics*, "obeying or anticipating the will of others, like the statue of Daedalus or the tripods of Hephaestus, which, says the poet, 'of their own accord entered the assembly of the Gods'; if, in like manner, the shuttle would weave and the plectrum touch the lyre without a hand to guide them, chief workmen would not want servants nor masters slaves." That was why the New Jerusalem could not be materialised before. But now modern science and technique had accomplished the miracle. The shuttle indeed now wove and the plectrum now touched the lyre almost without a hand to guide it; or, to be exact, one hand sufficed to move hundreds of shuttles, and a thousand instruments, combined in machines, "obeyed the will of others".

" . . . I exult to see  
 An intellectual mastery exercised  
 O'er the blind elements . . . almost a soul  
 Imparted to brute matter. I rejoice  
 Mastering the force of those gigantic powers  
 That, by the thinking mind, have been compelled  
 To serve the will of the feeble-bodied Man."

Thus Wordsworth (*Excursion*, Book 8) marvelled at the miracles

science and technique could work. Of course, science and technique have not rendered human labour dispensable, but they have multiplied its output a thousandfold. For the first time in the history of the human race abundance and luxury for all could be produced. This, then, was my first fundamental of social science.

I thought I knew why, in spite of the potential plenty which science and technique could provide, nine-tenths, or even more, of the human race lived in dire poverty. I was convinced by Marx's explanation that the clue to this riddle was to be sought in the existing legal order of property. It is based on the private ownership of the means of production by the few; it excludes the many from control over the resources of wealth. The guiding principle of economy is, thus, not the production of the maximum of plenty for the many, but the maximum of profit for the few. The utilisation of potential resources of wealth is limited by the rate of profit which the owners of the resources are able to derive from them.

Every day it became clearer to me that fundamental changes in the texture of society were upsetting the stupendous vested interests. For the private owners of the means of production this legal order of property is the basis of their personal wealth, power and social privilege. They rule society because they control economic life. A fundamental change in the legal order of property, the transformation of privately owned means of production into common ownership, would, of course, deprive the rulers of the basis of their power and of the wealth which goes with power.

Only such a change, I was certain, could right the "great wrong" and could abolish the poverty and ignorance of the masses.

Yet I could not imagine that such a fundamental change in the economic and social structure of society could result from gradual and imperceptible minute changes, because never in history have the ruling classes voluntarily abdicated and surrendered their resources of power, wealth and privilege. I could see with my own eyes that the dark old powers of conservatism and reaction clung as stubbornly to their privileges as did the French nobility before the French Revolution. I was convinced that only a revolution could depose them (as the French Revolution had deposed the feudal aristocracy), and so clear the road to the classless society of Socialism. I was certain that the time for the revolution was fast approaching, because the conditions for the revolution had matured.

I rejoiced at the good fortune of having been born at just this

momentous stage of history. In joining the Socialist movement I felt that I had joined the cadres of the revolution.

The headquarters at which I embarked on my revolutionary career scarcely displayed, however, any revolutionary glamour, except perhaps a red flag, which leaned sadly in a corner. The meeting-room was drab and musty. It had a capacity of about sixty. Behind it was a tiny, windowless room with a small library. This was the "club house" of the working-class youth group of Alsergrund (a district of Vienna), situated in the Badgasse No. 7. (A few years later we had grown so rapidly that we could afford to move, together with other Socialist organisations, into spacious and comfortable rooms in the Badgasse No. 2.)

The national leader of the Austrian Socialist youth movement was then Robert Danneberg. He was highly respected by us, for he was a Doctor of Law and Political Science, and had left his own class—his father, the proprietor of a comic journal, was reputed wealthy—to serve the cause of the workers. He would often come to our weekly meetings and speak about the plight of the young workers. Indeed, most of them had to live and work under the same appalling conditions as young David Copperfield. At that time most of the apprentices were engaged by small artisans, poor themselves and struggling desperately against the crushing competition of the big factories, and therefore perhaps compelled to squeeze the last drop of energy from their small slaves. In defiance of protective laws, the boys had to work from dawn to dusk, and frequently until late at night, for a little food, a bunk to sleep in, and a few pennies for pocket money. In addition to all these hardships they were usually handled very roughly. Among the members of my youth group there were hardly any of these underdogs, for the simple reason that such apprentices had no time and, above all, were threatened with death and the devil by their masters if they dared to join.

Danneberg made us realise that it was our supreme duty to help our unfortunate colleagues, firstly, by ascertaining and investigating the exact conditions of as many cases of ill-treated apprentices as possible, so as to provide material for legal intervention; and, secondly, to bring pressure to bear upon public opinion by public meetings, so as to make the country aware of this jungle of cruelty and barbarity and to induce it to support our demand for remedies. Danneberg had a quiet, unemotional, almost monotonous way of speaking. He would pile fact upon fact. He would disclose the revolting contrast between the Christian creed, upon which the Empire of His Apostolic Majesty allegedly rested, and the slavery of these helpless children of Christendom. He would appeal to our sense of human dignity

and solidarity; but he never used a strong word or raised his voice. He seemed to be composed wholly of a brain which worked with mathematical precision.

Soon after I joined I attended a series of six lectures on the budget of the Austrian State which Danneberg delivered to a large workers' audience. He began by showing us two big volumes, certainly more than a thousand pages each.

"These two volumes consist only of figures," he said. "But these figures tell the story of our daily life, a story more exciting than any detective story. If you read these figures you will be able to look inside the body of society; you'll see its heart, its veins, and its sinews. The budget is the social anatomy of the State."

Indeed, he made the examination of the budget an exciting story. With the figures which he quoted (by heart, of course) he illuminated every corner of the class character of society. He contrasted the expenditure of the State on prisons with its expenditure on schools, its expenditure on the Church with its expenditure on universities, its expenditure on racehorse breeding with its expenditure on children's hospitals, and we could see clearly that prisons, racehorses and the Church were nearer to the heart of the State than schools, universities and poor people's sick children. Above all, he demonstrated how the full weight of the magnificent superstructure of society was borne by the common people. He showed how the Army and Police were fed on the receipts from taxes on bread and sugar, beer and brandy, meat, drinking-water, houses and fares. The taxes, however, which the ruling classes had nominally to pay were generously refunded by an ingenious system of State subsidies for the big aristocratic landowners and sugar manufacturers. In fact, the Austrian nobility and clergy were as free from impost as were the French nobility and clergy before the Great Revolution. This social analysis was presented with exactitude, gaining in impressiveness by its unimpassioned presentation.

Yet I missed in Danneberg's lectures, as well as in the *Arbeiter Zeitung* (the leading daily of the Austrian Socialists, which I read from the first to the last line), any mention of the Revolution. After all, I had joined the movement mainly for the sake of the Revolution. I discussed with Robert this absence of so much as a hint of it. He was also a little disturbed, and wanted to see a more revolutionary spirit among the Socialist youth. I made up my mind to clear up the affair, and one evening, after Danneberg had spoken to our group about bread-and-butter matters, I asked him if I could walk home with him. I told him I wanted to ask him some important questions.

We had scarcely left our clubroom when rather impatiently I came straight to the point. All his talks on the plight of the apprentices, I said, were all right. But what about the Revolution? What sense was it to clamour for day-schools for apprentices if nobody paid any attention to our demands anyhow? Would it not be more sensible to start the Revolution now? Wouldn't the Revolution set right *all* the wrongs, not merely the wrongs perpetrated against the apprentices? I wanted to know precisely what he thought about the Revolution, and when it was supposed to begin and how it was supposed to proceed.

Danneberg stopped walking for a moment, looked down at me in the dim light of a lamp, and a kind smile passed over his round face.

"You are right," he said, and laid his left arm upon my shoulders. "You are right, the Revolution is indeed the most serious problem with which we are confronted. But you must understand that it is also the most complex problem, and, to tell you the truth, a little too complex to be covered in half an hour."

I was deeply disappointed, and suspected him of attempting to evade his obvious duty. But Danneberg went on to speak about the Revolution. He explained that revolutions are not only matters of the will, but also matters of conditions. The working-class movement in Austria, for instance, was in itself, he said, impressive; yet how small was the section of organised Labour compared with the section of unorganised Labour. And now, he said, compare further the actual power of the State, its armed forces, its police, its judicature, with the actual power of the working class. The workers had not even achieved parliamentary franchise, neither in Austria nor in Prussia, let alone in Czarist Russia. How, then, could you expect a working class which failed to accomplish political equality to win a Socialist revolution?

"A revolution needs not only fists, it also needs brains," said Danneberg. "The working class must mature intellectually to its revolutionary task, and it is our job now to fight for the conditions for this spiritual process."

"Do you believe," he asked me, "that the boys who have to work twelve and sixteen hours a day can develop the mental and physical conditions for the Socialist Revolution?"

He left me with a warm handshake and a kindly look through his shining spectacles, but he left me unconvinced, for I could not believe that the workers who "had nothing to lose but their chains and to win the whole world" would fail in the Revolution, if called on to fight. Still, what he told me about conditions in Europe gave me a lot to ponder over.



The trouble was, as I soon learned to understand from many lectures in our organisation, that the three empires with which I was most concerned—the Hapsburg, Hohenzollern and Romanoff empires—had not even gone through the middle-class revolution yet; they had not yet experienced their 1789; they were, basically, still feudal in their political structure, although capitalist, in varying degrees, in the economic domain.

Even Germany, industrially and culturally one of the most highly developed countries in the world, a country with strong middle classes and still stronger working classes, was essentially a military monarchy. The German Reich was ruled by the Kaiser in the spirit of a medieval liege lord by divine right, as if the whole realm were his personal estate, partitioned into fiefs among the feudal nobility. Indeed, when he spoke in public—and he liked nothing better—he used the romantic language of medieval kings; he appealed to “his people’s” sense of allegiance and their duty of obedience, which they had to accord to him personally as their supreme lord. He scolded and even vilified the Social Democrats, though they were about a quarter of “his people”, for lacking this sense of duty. Whenever he appeared before “his people”, he preferred to show himself in majestic glamour and shining armour: in pompous martial dress with a silver helmet, ornamented with a golden eagle. He rode on horseback and was surrounded by the barons of his realm and by his guard, which had to blow trumpet flourishes at not too long intervals. I myself saw him driving in a gilded state-carriage through the streets of Vienna when he paid a visit to Francis Joseph. Only when he went to see his much-feared grandmother, Queen Victoria, or his hated uncle, Edward VII, did he dress in civilian clothes.

Germany was, to be exact, a constitutional monarchy. It even had a Parliament based on universal manhood franchise. But the Reichstag did not have much control over the Government. The Government was appointed by the grace of the liege lord, with no regard to the wishes of Parliament, and responsible to him alone and to no one else. Certainly there was something like public opinion, articulate in Parliament, in the elections to the Reichstag and the Diets of the German countries which composed the Reich; there was also a Press, more or less unfettered, and civil rights as in every civilised country. Undoubtedly, public opinion was a factor on which the German Government had to count. Greater still was the influence exerted by big business and high finance. Yet, all the same, the Reich was basically dominated by the Kaiser and the nobility, above all in the domain of foreign policy.

In Prussia (consisting of about two-thirds of the population

of the Reich, and even more significant in its economic life) the class character of the society was especially marked by the class character of the franchise of the Prussian Diet. The electorate was divided, according to property and income, into three sections, securing for the landed nobility a dominant position in the Diet, and through the Diet over Prussia, and through Prussia over the Reich. Those who had no property and a low income had only a fraction of the total vote. When I entered the Socialist movement the first political impression to capture my imagination was the struggle of German Social Democracy for political equality and democracy.

I deeply admired the German Social-Democratic Party. Its driving power seemed irresistible. It really seemed close to the stage where our aims and hopes would materialise. Its membership numbered hundreds of thousands; the membership of the trade unions, closely affiliated to the Party, numbered millions. The movement was growing by leaps and bounds. No crystal ball seemed needed to foresee the moment when the Socialist movement in Germany would include the majority of the people and burst the fetters of the feudal-capitalist State.

The heroic past of the German Socialist movement gave me boundless enthusiasm for it. For twelve years the German Socialists had been outlawed, their leaders imprisoned or driven into exile, the fighters in the rank and file driven from their homes, from town to town, put on black lists and made workless. But nothing could break their spirit. The persecuted did not falter; they fought on. There were no deserters from the cause among them; there were only martyrs. Bismarck, I thought, had forged the German working-class movement into a revolutionary army of steel.

Then, too, it had inspiring leaders. There was the genius Lassalle, emerging from the darkness of the German reaction like a meteor; there was Wilhelm Liebknecht, the good old internationalist, fraternising with the French workers across the trenches during the Franco-Prussian War; and, above all, there was August Bebel! He was already an old man when I joined the movement, but the noble idealism of his youth, which he had retained, was mingled with the wisdom of a life rich in experience. For me (and surely for millions) he embodied the pure Socialist creed and also the overwhelming assurance of its triumph. When he spoke, it was as if all the cravings of the millions of workers all over the world for human dignity and social justice became articulate. Through his speech the thunder of the approaching revolution reverberated. I never heard him speak (though I had read some of his speeches in pamphlets, and I had

also read his book, *Die Frau und der Sozialismus*, in which the Socialist society to come was painted in glowing colours). But a man I knew who had years ago worked in a small German town had once heard him speak, and he told me about this memorable meeting. It was held in the biggest hall of the town. An hour before the meeting commenced the hall was packed, and still thousands more workers streamed in. So my friend and many more workers with him climbed up to the roof of the building, sitting on the roof-tree, and from this dizzy height attended the meeting far below their feet. He gladly risked his neck and his limbs, he said, to live to experience those two happy hours. When Bebel rose to speak thousands of cries of joy resounded. Then, amidst deathly silence, Bebel spoke, and his speech, echoing the longings and hopes of the disinherited, filled their hearts again with new hopes and longings. I was fascinated, and regretted immensely that I had not been with him on the roof-tree. It strengthened my optimism about the fast-approaching Revolution.

However, Danneberg seemed to be right when he said that at any rate in Austria and Russia the prospects of the Revolution were rather dim.

It was true that Austria lagged far behind Germany in many respects. Only comparatively small sections of the country were actually industrialised; and the industrialisation of Hungary, part of the Hapsburg Dual Monarchy, was only beginning; Hungary was still a predominantly feudal agricultural country. The Austrian Labour movement was therefore developed only in certain districts of the Empire, and was thus far weaker than the German.

Also, the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy was an Empire of ten or twelve nations with different languages, different religious creeds, different cultural traditions and in different stages in the process of civilisation; the manifold problems of these many nations, living together in the same State, multiplied the social and political problems with which the Socialist movement was confronted.

The Austrian Empire was far older than the German Empire, therefore the dynastic traditions were deeper rooted in Austria than in Germany. The German Empire was founded only forty years before (in 1871); the Hohenzollern dynasty was an upstart compared with the Hapsburg dynasty. Prussia had existed as an independent dukedom since 1657 and as a kingdom only since 1701; the Hapsburgs, however, had been Emperors of Germany since 1273, and remained emperors, with an interval, until 1806 (after Francis II had renounced the title and become hereditary

emperor of Austria). My schoolmaster once took our class to see the Imperial Treasure Chamber; there I saw, exhibited in a glass shrine, the heavy octagonal crown with which Charlemagne was crowned in Rome on Christmas Day, 800. The Hapsburgs had worn this crown from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century. The precious collection of the most beautiful paintings by Breughel and Tintoretto in the Court Museum served, apart from the gratification of our aesthetic sense, as a permanent reminder that the Hapsburgs had also ruled Belgium, Venetia and Lombardy.

This centuries-old dynastic tradition, enhanced by the glamour of the great power which the Hapsburgs once possessed, weighed heavily against progress. For the tradition of the Hapsburgs was, above all, the tradition of the European Counter-Reformation and Counter-Revolution.

Austria was, it should be remembered, the Power of the Counter-Reformation *par excellence*. The crowned Austrian Jesuit, Ferdinand of Styria, afterwards the Emperor Ferdinand II, bore the chief guilt for the Thirty Years' War, which had laid the flourishing cities of Germany in ruins, which had turned their blossoming lands into deserts and which had exterminated two-thirds of her population. He was resolved to uproot the heretics from his dominion and to subdue all the religious life of his realm under the iron rule of the Jesuit Order. And he succeeded, at any rate in Austria. He restored the power of the Catholic Church in Austria with the dungeon, rack, gibbet and stake. The Austrian slogan: "I will make you a Catholic!" had remained a most formidable threat since Ferdinand's time, and was still frequently used by school teachers to scare pupils who were not suitably obedient and submissive. H. A. L. Fisher, in his *History of Europe*, says of Ferdinand: "Few men so honest, pious and consistent have brought upon the world so great an avalanche of misery."\* And few men, it could be added, have devastated the minds and spirit of so many generations. While the Reformation was intellectually the emancipation of reason in the modern world, the Counter-Reformation reversed this process in Austria for the subsequent centuries. For hundreds of years the minds of the Austrian people were contaminated by the spirit of Jesuitism, this graceless spirit of insincerity, cowardice and hypocrisy, with its total lack of any sense of responsibility and dignity, against which the best of the Austrians revolted in despair. How Grillparzer, Austria's greatest dramatist, groaned under its curse; and with what brilliance of wit did Nestroy castigate it! While the Reformation attempted to depose the

\* H. A. L. Fisher, *A History of Europe*, p. 612.

mighty, the Counter-Reformation enhanced their despotic sway.

The Hapsburgs remained true to their traditions until the dawn of their inglorious end. They were the head of the unholy conspiracy of tyrants against freedom all over Europe after the fall of Napoleon; they were the jailers of democracy in Germany, Austria, Italy, Hungary, Bohemia; they remained for centuries the symbol and pattern of the Police-State. After the French Revolution, Austria became the Catholic Church's most faithful daughter.

In Austria the Catholic Church was a militant church, domineering, intolerant—the incarnation of reaction, oppression and opportunism; the State power was its willing instrument.

Feudal Church and feudal State were closely knit not only by tradition, but certainly still more by mutual interest. It was a function of the Church to keep the people in obedience to the ruling classes; it was, therefore, the interest of the ruling classes to strengthen the authority of the Church.

The importance of the Church grew all the stronger, the stronger the Socialist movement grew. In my youth the encyclical *Quod apostolici numeris*, enunciated by Pope Leo XIII on December 28, 1878, was still in full force and vigorously preached from the pulpits and the Catholic Press and organisations. It was a formidable anathema against the "heresy of those who call themselves with the almost barbaric names: Socialists, Communists or Nihilists". It indicted the Socialists for their aspiration to a juster order. "Firmly united in a criminal association . . . seized by the savage greed for wealth . . . they propagate their monstrous ideas among the multitude", thus the Supreme Pontiff interpreted the Socialist aims. "Therefore," he said, "the venerable magnificence of the Kings and the ruling powers fell into discredit. . . . Therefore it is not surprising to observe that the people of the lower order became weary of their humble huts and workshops and glanced covetously at the palaces of the rich." And Leo XIII emphasised that the secular power of the State was helpless against "the pestilence of Socialism"; only the ecclesiastic power could exterminate it. "The Church," he claimed in his encyclical, "possesses a power of defence against the pestilence of Socialism which is denied to secular laws, or to the secular authorities, or to the weapon of the armed forces." And the Pope appealed to his flocks: "Beware that no Catholic joins or promotes this heretical association!" The alliance between Pope and Emperor rested, thus, on the solid foundation of mutual self-preservation.

This alliance was most impressively displayed by the pro-

cession on Corpus Christi Day, which I had once watched. The pageantry was opened by imperial troops in battle-dress, as if they had to force the way for the representatives of the Church who followed them. Behind the troops walked monks and friars, the Franciscans and the Capuchins, the Dominicans, the Augustinians and Carmelites, reciting the rosary; then came white-clad girls and young men, carrying a forest of colourful church flags and standards with votive pictures and sacred images; then came the choristers and choirboys, singing the litany; then came the high dignitaries of the Church, the prelates and deacons in purple and ermine, and bishops carrying crosiers; and then the cardinal-archbishop in his mitre, with the sacred vessels in his hands, walking beneath a canopy, surrounded by choir-boys swinging the censer. Then followed the old Emperor, bareheaded, flanked by the Spanish Guard carrying halberds; and behind him the imperial Court; then the nobility and the generals, and behind them marched more imperial troops in battle-dress. This was the order of that magnificent pageantry; it reflected somehow the actual power relations between Church and State.

In the 'sixties the century-old alliance between Church and aristocracy was enlarged by the reluctant admission of the rising class of manufacturers, bankers and merchants, as junior partners. In 1848 the intelligentsia, emerging from the Viennese middle class, then still weak, rose against Metternich's despotism and the Church. It was supported by the working class, still in its infancy. The revolution triumphed. The Emperor had to dismiss Metternich, to concede a democratic constitution, even to flee the capital of the Empire with his Court. The Jesuits also, the much-hated symbol of the ruthless will to power of the Catholic Church, had to leave the city. For more than a year Vienna was in the hands of the revolutionaries and was the head of the revolution in all German lands.

But the old forces of darkness gathered their resources again. The revolution had liberated the small peasants from the last remnants of medieval servitude. The peasants, spiritually dominated by the Church, while accepting the gifts of the revolution, had, however, no feeling of gratitude towards their liberators; they remained unmoved when Prince Schwarzenberg got together an army and besieged Vienna, after the Hapsburgs had, with the help of Czarist Cossacks, crushed Kossuth's revolution in Hungary. Vienna was taken by storm. The constitution was abrogated, the old régime restored.

But while the Hapsburgs triumphed in their wars against their own people, they were defeated in their wars against other

States. They lost Lombardy in 1859 and Venetia in 1866, and were expelled from the German Confederation. The Hapsburgs now realised that they would jeopardise the whole empire if they did not make peace, if not with the whole of their people, at least with the middle classes. A constitution was promulgated in December 1867 which, while excluding the whole working class from any influence upon the legislature, granted the bankers, merchants, manufacturers and the upper strata of the peasantry a little say in the affairs of State. Still in 1891, after the constitution had been repeatedly altered, only 1·7 million out of 26 million inhabitants of Austria (excluding Hungary, which had her own Parliament) had the right to vote.

But even for the privileged there was no equality. The electorate was divided into four estates. There was an estate of the aristocratic landowners, with eighty-five seats in the House; there was an estate of the manufacturers, merchants and bankers, with twenty-one seats; there was another of the upper crust in the cities and towns, with 118 seats; there was an estate of the peasantry, with 129 seats. The vote of one aristocratic landowner was thus equal to the votes of forty-three urban taxpayers or to 170 peasants; the workers had no vote at all. Five years later a fifth estate, with five million voters, was added to the four, but the estate of the common people had altogether only seventy-two seats, thirteen less than the handful of aristocrats. In this Austrian Parliament 1·7 million voters of the middle classes had four times as many representatives as the five million voters of the working classes.

Even so, the Parliament was powerless, because there was also an Upper House, the members of which were appointed by the Emperor from among the nobility, the high clergy and the very rich; it was equal in rights, and superior in power, to the Lower House. The representatives of the working class thus could raise their voices in the Parliament, but they had no influence whatever in the State, and no hope of gaining any influence, unless by a change in the constitution.

In addition to these safeguards of the privileged, the constitution preserved for the Emperor the power to adjourn the Parliament whenever it pleased him, and to promulgate decrees with the force of law. So, for example, the Emperor, anticipating the outbreak of war, prorogued the Parliament at the beginning of 1914 and did not call it again until 1917; he declared wars, raised armies, suspended civil liberties, taxed the people to the limit of their ability to pay and promulgated hundreds of decrees without constitutional legislation.

Austria was, in fact, a despotism. It was, to be fair, not a

cruel tyranny, compared with the Czarist despotism of those days or with the Hitler despotism of our day; it was an effete, almost imbecile despotism. It was dominated by an aristocracy, typified by Count Berchtold, who set the world ablaze with the same disarming nonchalance with which he used to play roulette. It was administered by a bureaucracy, honest yet irresponsible, servile towards superiors, yet surly and often brutal towards the common man; it was, above all, sluggish and petty, and engaged in interminable malicious struggles between the governmental departments and against each other. Though Austria was a despotism, she was, in Victor Adler's famous phrase, "a despotism mitigated by slovenliness".

Lassalle's clarion call in the 'sixties also pierced the decaying walls of Catholic Austria. There went through the Hapsburgs' lands an awakening of the working class. Its attempts, however, at forming trade unions and a political Labour movement were, as was to be expected, repressed. The repression in turn bred violence, which provoked still more ruthless persecution. The convictions of a considerable section of the working people became all the more confirmed that force must be met with force and that only by force could the despotic régime be overthrown. The followers of this school of thought were called "Radicals"; they were opposed by the "moderate Socialists", who pleaded for the methods of persuasion and gradual reform. "Radicals" and "Moderates" fought each other with the characteristic passion of fraternal struggles, and so from the beginning of the Labour movement in Austria the working class was split.

It was Victor Adler's superior intelligence which succeeded, in 1889, in reconciling the contending wings of the Labour movement and in forming the Austrian Social Democratic Party. Old comrades liked to dwell upon this achievement when telling the history of our Party. Victor Adler was, they said, neither a "Radical" nor a "Moderate"; he was a Socialist and, above all, a great personality. The Second International was a unique assembly of remarkable figures. Five men among them, however, were especially distinguished, and they named them with pride: August Bebel, Jean Jaurès, Keir Hardie, Emile Vandervelde, "and, of course our Victor Adler", they would add.

Victor Adler's name was always spoken in the Austrian Labour movement with awe and admiration. He was respected throughout the whole country, and even my father, much as he disliked any sort of political activity and little as he knew about Victor Adler's position in public life, would mention his name reverently. When I joined the youth organisation I had already



heard about the famous Victor Adler. He became the embodiment of the ideals to which I had dedicated myself.

Months had to pass before I got my first opportunity of attending a meeting at which he was to speak. It was held in a big working-class meeting hall in one of the stately Labour Club Houses built by the Party. The hall was packed with workers, men and women, just as they had left the work bench; there they sat at small tables, smoking and drinking beer, or standing before the rostrum and between and behind the rows of tables. When Adler entered the hall, and also when he rose to speak, frantic applause greeted him.

It was the first time I had seen him. He was short, scraggy and almost fragile. His left shoulder was bent forward. His face was pale, with a lock of his bushy dark-brown hair curled over his forehead; his dark eyes sparkled through gold-rimmed spectacles, and sometimes his hand would pass over his greyish moustache. He spoke slowly and pensively, interspersing sentences of delightful wit and irony. But suddenly a word would seem to fail him; he would apparently struggle for it with all his strength, and then pronounce it with overwhelming power. Victor Adler had the shortcoming of Demosthenes, and perhaps also his might: he was one of the great orators of Austria.

There was also something romantic surrounding the figure of my new hero. Victor Adler came from a wealthy Jewish-Bohemian family which had, in the 'fifties, emigrated from Prague to Vienna when he was still a small child. He had devoted the whole fortune which he had inherited to the Labour movement. The workers admired Victor Adler's strength of mind; but there was also a feeling of profound gratitude to the man who had left his own class and had relinquished his career, wealth and comfort for the sake of the workers. For the Labour movement had then little more to offer members of the middle classes than an unending, nerve-racking struggle against greed and stupidity. Gaol was almost the only holiday place for its leaders. The workers felt that it was humanity and compassion which determined Victor Adler's career.

When I later studied the man and politician Victor Adler, I saw that neither philosophical speculation nor Marx's concept of history, but, in Virgil's language, "the tears of things", drove him into the working-people's camp. He studied medicine to serve as a doctor of the poor; he travelled extensively through England, Switzerland and Germany to study social legislation, welfare institutions and the workers' conditions in order to get them introduced in his country. Disguised in rags as a brickmaker, he insinuated himself into the big brickyards near Vienna which were guarded like prisons. There he investigated the conditions

of those under-dogs who received their few shillings wages not in cash but in chits, valid only in the company's canteen, and had to live in the workers' barracks of the firm, five and six families in a single room, men, women and children together. It was these experiences which made Victor Adler a Socialist. "It is intolerable," he once said in a speech, "to watch how whole generations of children remain unborn, because they perish of hunger in the wombs of their mothers living at the brink of starvation; it is mortifying to see so many children languishing and dying in their infancy, because they are underfed; it is revolting to watch the poor dying at an age when the rich just begin to live their lives." He defined Socialism as "the equal right of all to health".

Of course, later on in life he acquainted himself with the theory and history of Socialist thought, inspired largely by Friedrich Engels, whose intimate friendship Adler prized above all else. But he approached every problem from its human aspect, and it was the human chord which rang through all he said and did. It is characteristic of Victor Adler's personality that his favourite authors were Shelley and Ibsen. Shelley's noble idealism, pushed to its last logical consequence, and Ibsen's warm-hearted common sense in exposing social prejudices and atavistic institutions, moods and behaviour of contemporary society—both these trends of emotion and thought appealed to Victor Adler's nature and reflected his mentality.

From Marx, however, he derived a deep insight into the dynamics of history, an insight which to a high degree determined his policy. His five essays on Marx\* are among the finest and most lucid analyses of Marx's thought I know. And it was again the human side of Marx's personality which fascinated Victor Adler most. He hailed Marx as "the biggest brain of our century"; but he also venerated him as "a great idealist", as "a man with a great heart full of love, a heart of a greatness of generosity second to none".

Adler accepted without reservation Marx's philosophy of history, conceived as a class struggle, determined by the prevailing system of property, which, in turn, is determined by the development of technology; he was convinced by Marx's theory that modern technology and capitalist economy had developed the conditions for the termination of the age-old class struggle through the transformation of the capitalist society into the Socialist society; and he saw clearly that this transformation would have to be carried out by the working class alone and by no one else.

\* Published in the first volume of Victor Adler's *Aufsätze, Reden und Briefe*.

He was, perhaps more acutely than anyone else, aware of the importance of the human factor in this process of history. If it is true that the working class is "called on by history" to be instrumental in the creation of the classless society of true freedom and equality, it is no less true that the working class must be mature enough for this awe-inspiring task. If it is true that the capitalist economy and modern technology are creating the objective conditions of Socialism, it is no less true that the working class itself must create its subjective conditions. Capitalist society might collapse, indeed it is bound to collapse, he once said: "but then the destiny of the working class will depend upon the degree of its intellectual maturity", he added. To Victor Adler, the improvement of the health of the workers by the improvement of their conditions of life was, therefore, as essential a revolutionary task as the education of the workers in the art of public affairs by means of democratising the State. "Every reform is important in itself," he said, "but its real value must be measured by its intrinsic revolutionary significance." To make the workers physically, intellectually and morally capable of fulfilling their revolutionary mission, this he considered the supreme task of the Social Democratic Party. He never tired of preaching that the working class must not lose sight of its great goal. "Socialism as Marx and Engels conceived it," he said, "is not merely an economic doctrine; it is an outlook on life." And the working class must become "conscious of its historic dignity".

Victor Adler was extremely sensitive to his task. He felt the full weight of responsibility which he had to bear as the workers' leader. The working class was then confronted with the most redoubtable and rancorous police machine in Europe, and any mistake in tactics could spell disaster for thousands of its best men and throw the movement back for decades. He was therefore extremely anxious to avoid any hazard. Yet he was fearless and firm when he felt that great things were at stake; then he was prepared to risk even the whole movement.

He did precisely that in 1890. In commemoration of the centenary of the French Revolution, delegates of the Labour movement from all over Europe and America assembled in Paris in 1889 and revived the International Socialist Workers' Association, founded by Karl Marx; the refounded International was called the Second International. The Congress now proclaimed the First of May to be the day of the international working classes, celebrated by the labourers all over the world in the spirit of international brotherhood and as the sign of their struggle for the eight-hour day. Walter Crane's wood-cut

expresses perhaps most felicitously the image of the idea of May Day as it was then visualised by the workers.

The International Socialist Congress left the arrangement for this day to the national movements, according to the conditions in the different countries. Neither the English and French nor the German Socialist leaders thought it possible to celebrate the day by a general strike. Victor Adler dared it. He suggested a twenty-four-hour general strike and mass demonstrations all over the Hapsburg Empire.

This was a bold decision indeed, as an old comrade who had experienced this heroic period of our movement told me. For in 1890 the Austrian Labour movement was still in its infancy, its Party formed just a year ago, and still subject to special laws, similar to Bismarck's anti-Socialist law; and it was confronted with a stupendous machinery of coercion. If, then, the workers, scarcely organised, had refused to respond to the call of the Party, or if the Government had prohibited the general strike and suppressed it with force and dispersed the workers' processions with arms, a critical situation beyond human control might have emerged.

The Government was bewildered, dismayed and furious. The Cabinet instructed the provincial Governors all over the Empire to secure military assistance in good time. On April 12 a special inter-departmental commission was set up to deal with this tiresome affair. Croatian and Bosnian troops were concentrated in Vienna, Hungarian and Polish troops in Bohemia, German and Czech troops in Polish Galicia. The railings surrounding the lawns in the Prater, the Viennese Hyde Park, where the workers' processions were about to meet, were removed as obstacles for the cavalry, should it be called on to charge. Emperor Francis Joseph convened the members of his Cabinet to a special meeting on April 18, and urged them "to intervene vigorously"; he emphasised that the proclamation of a general strike was a breach of law and that the Government had categorically "to encounter the growing Socialist movement with energy". The gloom which reigned in the palaces and places of the rich was vividly reflected in a leading article of the *Neue Freie Presse* (the chief paper of the Austrian bourgeoisie), which wrote on the eve of that first May Day: "The soldiers are on the alert and ready to march; the doors of the houses are bolted; families have stored food as if they had to face a siege; the shops are deserted; women and children don't dare to leave the house; anxiety and sorrow lie as a heavy weight upon the hearts of the people. . . ." It appeared to the upper classes and the middle classes as if Judgment Day was at hand.

There was, however, no revolution in the sense of street-battles and massacres; not a drop of blood was shed. Neither was there a visible change in the power relations of society. And yet, my old comrades would tell me with sparkling eyes, it was something like a revolution which occurred, a spiritual revolution, a subconscious change in the mind of the working class, a sudden switch of outlook that changes heaven and earth. On this very day the working class of Austria awakened to a new conception of its destiny. In hundreds of thousands over the whole Empire, by putting down their tools and marching, dignified, firm, undaunted, in front of Austria's armed forces, they professed their newly won creed of Socialism.

This psychological change naturally had repercussions on the policy of the State. The special laws against the Socialists were revoked; the Socialist Party became respected as a factor to be reckoned with. At the same time, the workers, feeling their potential power, founded trade unions, which improved their conditions. And the Socialist Party grew considerably in size and coherence. When, about fifteen years after the first celebration of the May Day, I joined the movement, it had grown almost to a state within the State.

I devoured all these stories about the struggle and rise of our movement. I longed impatiently to see Victor Adler lead it into a new heroic stage. But it appeared to me that that glorious old fighter had become tired and that the Socialist movement had lost its revolutionary *élan*. Victor Adler concentrated all the efforts of the movement upon the struggle for the workers' franchise and for democracy. The country reverberated with the cries of the workers for equal rights, raised in tens of thousands of meetings. But these cries apparently did not shake the walls behind which the ruling classes were powerfully entrenched. This method of fighting seemed to be hopeless and only a little inspiring. It also seemed that nowhere else in Europe was the revolution about to emerge. This state of things did not quite correspond with my glowing expectations; disappointment and discontent crept into my soul.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FIRST FLASH OF THE REVOLUTION

"Liberty is the fundamental problem of human relations, in which alone human society flourishes and bears fruit, the only reason for the life of man on the earth and without which life would not be worth living."—Benedetto Croce, *History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*.

MY DISAPPOINTING talk with Danneberg left me with the impression that we, unfortunately, lived in a period of ebb in a backwater of history, and that no sign was visible on the European horizon heralding the rise of its next tide.

But only a few weeks had passed since that talk when, apparently out of nowhere, the flood-tide came rolling in on mighty waves.

It was on the eve of All Souls Day in 1905 when Robert Lackenbacher unexpectedly turned up at my home, excited as I had never seen him before, his impassive Mongoloid face gleaming, his slit eyes sparkling, and, looking around the overcrowded room in which I sat reading, said to me, "Come along, Julius, we will have a walk; something important has happened."

When we stepped out into the chilly street on which slush was trickling down, Robert told me he had just left the Annual Conference of our Party, where he had learned that two great things had occurred. First, he said, the Russian Revolution had scored an immense success; the Czar had issued a Manifesto in which he promised a constitution of liberty and the calling of a Parliament. Secondly, the Conference, hearing about the news from Russia, had decided upon a general strike in order to enforce the reform of Parliament.

Robert then told me what had happened at the Conference. It was at the morning session, he said, when Wilhelm Ellenbogen was making a speech. Someone went up to the rostrum and handed him a slip of paper. Ellenbogen interrupted his speech for a moment to read the note, and then proclaimed, amidst a deadly silence, "Comrades, I have great news for you. The Russian Revolution has won the day. A constitution is promulgated. Long live the Russian Revolution!"

There was a roar of enthusiasm on the floor. The delegates rose and cheered and clapped their hands; somebody started to sing the *International*, the others followed, and the melody echoed powerfully through the big hall.

After the outburst of joy had died down, Ellenbogen, who had not left his place on the platform, with a great gesture of his right arm asked for silence. A hush fell and he said, "Well, comrades, I think we must stop talking in our soft Austrian language; I suggest that we speak to our rulers from now on in the firm language of the Russians." Again a storm of applause interrupted him. "I suggest," he went on, "that we use the same methods of political struggle as our Russian comrades did, those methods which have forced Czarism to its knees. I suggest the proclamation of a general strike to enforce parliamentary reform." A roar of cheers showed that Ellenbogen had the Conference with him.

Ellenbogen had been the protagonist of the political strike for years; his suggestion was therefore not surprising. But it was a great surprise to the Conference, Robert went on in his narration, that the cautious Victor Adler adopted it this time. He agreed with the proclamation of a general strike all over Austria; but he suggested limiting it to twenty-four hours, to be carried out on the day (November 28, 1905) when Parliament was to assemble. To add further pressure he proposed mass demonstrations in every city and town. He indicated at the same time that the general strike, while confined for the moment to twenty-four hours, could be prolonged should the situation require still stronger pressure. A year later, when the Upper House seemed to be obstructing the Reform Bill, he actually suggested a three-days general strike.

This decision in 1905, as well as the one in 1906, demonstrated Victor Adler's strategical genius. When he chose to attack, he attacked with the full power of the working class. But he was always concerned lest he lose control over events. Therefore he mobilised the movement only for aims which, however bold, were not quite beyond practical materialisation; and, secondly, he limited beforehand the extent of the operations.

But for the moment Robert and I were not much concerned with Victor Adler's strategy; nor even with the prospect of the general strike in our country. The news from Russia overshadowed everything; it came as a great stimulus to heart and mind.

It is now very difficult to convey the profound impression which the first Russian Revolution in 1905 made on its contemporaries. For since then humanity has passed through so many political and social upheavals and eruptions of incomparably reater magnitude that its receptivity for history in flux has become almost stunted.

But to us in 1905 Russia's first Revolution sparkled in the dew of a new dawn. For it was the first rising of the working class since

the Paris Commune in 1871. It was surrounded by a romantic glamour of heroism, ennobled by the justice of its cause and its aims. I was still at school, and entirely ignorant of politics, when a hideous crime was perpetrated by the Czar on January 22, 1905, which became known as "Bloody Sunday". On this day tens of thousands of unarmed workers went in a solemn procession to the Czar's Winter Palace in St. Petersburg to submit this humble message to him:

"Lord! We workers, our children, our women and our old helpless parents, want to see you, Lord, to seek truth and your protection.

"We are impoverished; we are suppressed; we are burdened with unbearably hard toil; we are insulted; we are not recognised as human beings; we are treated as slaves; we have to carry on our lot and are prohibited from raising our voice.

"Yet however horrible our fate was, we have been pushed ever deeper into the abyss of poverty, lawlessness and ignorance.

"Despotism and arbitrariness are strangulating us—we suffocate.

"We have no strength any longer, O Lord!

"The limit of our patience has been reached. For us the terrible moment has arrived when death is better than the continuation of the unbearable torments. . . .

"Command and swear, O Lord, that you will remedy our grievances:—then you will make Russia happy and glorious. . . .

"But if you disregard our humble entreaties:—then we want to die here, on this place, before your Palace."\*

Who could remain unmoved at this message! But the Czar, an imbecile, miserable creature in the hands of the nobility, had made up his mind to let the people die before the Palace rather than relinquish an inch of his autocracy. He surrounded the Winter Palace with the Imperial Guards and Cossacks, and when the peaceful procession, led by the priest Gapon (who was, as has later been revealed, in the service of the police), approached the military cordon, rifle salvos mowed down the masses of men, women and children, while Cossacks charged them. The coverlet of snow on the square before the Palace was scarlet with the blood of the killed and wounded.

Like millions all over the globe, I was shocked to the depths of my heart, and even my father became deadly grave when I, with tears in my eyes, told him what had happened. He muttered, "How horrible! And how utterly senseless!" For nights my sleep was haunted by the picture of Cossacks trampling down human

\* Quoted by L. Trotsky, *Die russische Revolution* 1905, p. 63.



flesh under the hoofs of their horses. It was as though I could in my dream hear the screams of the tortured, and I awakened in despair, bathed in tears and sweat. Later I read in Socialist papers descriptions of how political prisoners in chains, escorted by mounted Cossacks with whips in their hands, were driven through ice and snow over the Siberian plain, and a burning hatred of Czarism scourged my soul. I felt then the same deep compassion for the martyred Russian revolutionaries in the Peter and Paul Fortress and in the Siberian mines as I feel to-day for Hitler's victims in the concentration camps. And I craved to see the Czar killed, or overthrown, or, at least, humiliated.

Now at any rate the hour of humiliation had come. October of 1905 was the answer to January of 1905. The Czar was forced to capitulate, and liberty triumphed. I myself felt it as a personal revenge.

But Robert was mainly concerned with the historic significance of the Revolution. The Russian Revolution, released by Russia's setbacks in the war against Japan, had emerged, as had the Paris Commune, from war and defeat. Yet the Paris Commune was massacred, and a quarter of a century had to pass before the French working class recovered from this fearful defeat. What were the prospects for the Russian Revolution? This was the point which Robert wanted to discuss while we walked the dim street, wet to our skins.

The Paris Commune was bound to fail, he said, because its aims were unattainable. The Paris workers rose to redeem the national disgrace which Napoleon had brought upon France; they wanted to continue the war, which was already lost, and which the peasants, as well as the middle class, had deserted. The Paris Commune made, furthermore, vague attempts to materialise some Socialist aims; however modest they were, they frightened the middle classes and provoked their fury and hatred. For these two reasons, Robert explained, the Commune could not have prevailed, and he recalled that Marx had warned the workers not to rise, and had later called the Commune "heroic foolishness".

But the Russian Revolution, Robert went on, had not such ambitious aims, out of proportion to the real power relation in that State. It was freedom for which it fought; it was an attempt, he said, to assert in this barbaric empire at long last civil liberties which the English middle classes had secured long ago in the glorious Revolution of 1688, and to secure the Rights of Men, which had been proclaimed by the French Revolution in 1789.

"Surely," Robert concluded, "the workers of St. Petersburg,

Moscow and Odessa are now doing only the job which the middle classes of London and Paris accomplished centuries before."

He believed that the Russian Revolution had a great chance. But he left me no illusion that the Russian Revolution could achieve more than the middle-class revolutions in Western Europe; anything like Socialism was not to be expected, he said. But we were at one in the opinion that even the achievement of civil liberties alone would be no mean reward for the greatest efforts and sacrifices. To Robert and to me (as to all Socialists of those days) liberty was naturally and unquestionably regarded as an end in itself, as the highest human value, as the purport and sum total of the Socialist ideal.

Socialism without liberty was for all of us simply inconceivable. Socialism appeared, in the first place, to be the materialisation of the equality of man—how, then, could equality be realised without freedom? Socialism appeared to be the materialisation of democracy—that is, of government of the people, by the people, for the people. How, then, could democracy be realised without freedom? Socialism appeared to be the materialisation of true justice, justice in its deeper meaning, of political justice, social justice and economic justice as well. How, then, could justice be realised without freedom? In the heyday of the Socialist movement, Socialism was conceived as a social order of society based on the common ownership of the means of wealth; it was conceived as a classless society, as a society without rulers and ruled. How, then, was such a society thinkable without freedom? Socialism was the vision of a society in which every one of its members would enjoy economic security as well as the highest degree of personal freedom.

Liberty was, as we thus understood it then, first of all the freedom from political and spiritual arbitrariness, the supreme precondition for human dignity, one of the "immutable unwritten laws of Heaven" of which Sophocles' Antigone said:

"They were not born to-day nor yesterday;  
They die not; and none knoweth whence they sprang."

Liberty, further, appeared then to us to be freedom from economic arbitrariness—that is, freedom from the capitalist wage slavery which had replaced feudal serfdom and ancient slavery. Because we aimed at the extension of political democracy to economic and social democracy, we Social Democrats were distinguished from the Liberals.

We understood, then, that the idea of liberty, like the idea of Plato's beauty, climbs in its processes of materialisation in steps from political and spiritual freedom to political equality, and

from political equality to social and economic equality, until it attains in the autonomy of man, organised in a universal commonwealth, its total fulfilment.

In Austria we interpreted the meaning of our struggle for parliamentary reform as the struggle for the second step towards liberty. We thought we had achieved political freedom (though not political equality), because the Rights of Man were incorporated in the Austrian Constitution of 1867. Yet these rights were considerably twisted by juridical "interpretations", and by practical applications of all sorts of restriction made possible by loopholes in the Constitution. In addition, the Emperor had the power to suspend the Constitution whenever it pleased him. Victor Adler always insisted on seeing the real face of the Hapsburg despotism behind its mask of constitutionalism. Indeed, when the Hapsburg Empire went to war in 1914, it dropped its constitutional mask, and its devilish face could be seen in all its revolting ugliness and savagery.

When our struggle for parliamentary reform reached its climax in the years 1905 and 1906, there was no self-deception as to the significance of our fight; its aim was democracy, and nothing beyond it.

But in Russia even the first step to liberty had not yet been achieved. The Russian Revolution of 1905 appeared to us, then, as a heroic endeavour to reach the first step, freeing the individual from an omnipotent, cruel, corrupt and stupid despotism.

"Yet I wonder," Robert went on reflecting, "whether the Russian Revolution might not have far-reaching repercussions on the whole of Europe." In Russia, of course, the aims of the Revolution were limited by the social and economic conditions of that country. There was no strong working class, the middle class was still in its infancy, and the vast masses of peasants were ignorant, illiterate and superstitious. But it was quite possible, he said, that the spark of the liberal revolution in Russia might kindle socialist revolutions in Germany and Western Europe. And he recalled that Victor Adler had in a speech three months before heralded a new outburst of the Russian Revolution (which now had come), and had predicted that it would signify a "turning point in world history" as the beginning of a series of revolutions in Europe. "As the French Revolution was the prelude to the nineteenth century, so the Russian Revolution would," he said, "be the prelude to the twentieth century". A new century of revolutions dawns, Adler prophesied; but it will no longer be the revolution of the middle classes, but the revolution of the working classes.

Next day the *Arbeiter Zeitung* led us back to our job in Austria. Its front page contained the manifesto of the Party Conference,

proclaiming a twenty-four-hour strike all over the country on November 28; at the same time the workers of Vienna were invited to take "just a stroll" over the Ringstrasse before the Parliament on the following Sunday morning (November 2).

Robert and I, of course, went to the Parliament on Sunday. On our way there we met lots of groups of five and six moving in the same direction, and we passed squadrons of mounted police in the vicinity of the Ringstrasse. The ramp of the Parliament's building, from which Karl Seitz, Victor Adler's lieutenant, and later chairman of the Party, spoke, was already surrounded by thousands of people when we arrived. But hardly had we joined the crowd when mounted police charged it and scattered it with the utmost savagery. The workers, not prepared for this surprising attack, did not resist. Next day we learned from the papers that over a hundred people had been wounded. That was my first experience of the power of the State. The skirmish indicated, moreover, that stormy days were ahead. I was highly excited in the expectation of the great things to come.

My most urgent concern, however, was to find out how the people in my shop reacted to the Russian Revolution and to the general strike proclamation of our Party. I knew only one of the hundred-odd employees in our factory to be a member of the Party and also a member of the bookbinders' trade union. Leo Kris, a sad-looking man in his thirties, had served as an apprentice with the firm, and had never changed his job; he used to read the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, and paid his contributions to the Party and the trade union punctually. But he always grumbled about the Party, and seemed by no means happy about it. "Yesterday," he said when he saw me in the morning, "I also went for the stroll over the Ringstrasse. But what was the good of it?" he asked. "I got a smack over my shoulder with the sabre of one of those bloodhounds and had to run for my life. There you have your Party!" he concluded. This was his way of reasoning during the next twenty years I was in touch with him. However, he was, and remained all his life, a devoted Socialist.

But I wanted to know who among our people in the shop were to be trusted as comrades and likely to strike on November 28. Leo Kris sighed and drew a deep breath; then he disclosed to me that he had reason to believe that five others of our colleagues were trade-union members; but he was not sure about that, and he did not want to ask them or to tell me their names.

With the exception of Kris, no one in our shop would touch a political subject with a ten-foot pole. Even Kris was rather restrained in discussing political matters and in expressing his opinion, though he never concealed it when it came to the point.

In the gilding department, in which I worked most of the time, there were two workers whom I liked best; one of them was Josef Navratil, a very kind man in his forties, tall, bony, with greyish hair. He would talk only about his tiny vineyard on a slope in Grinzing on the outskirts of Vienna. There he lived in a small wooden hut, and spent all his spare time digging the stony soil, cultivating the poor grapes, and watching the blackbirds and thrushes.

The other fellow (I have forgotten his name) was a gymnast in his late twenties, fair, handsome, short, stocky, and with gigantic muscles. He aspired to the weight-lifting championship, and was untiring in his training; during the four years when I worked with him he increased the weight he was able to lift by at least twenty pounds. His hero and fellow club member was Jakob Steinbach, then Viennese weight-lifting champion, and my friend told me in awe and admiration about his miraculous deeds, his technique, and the incredible portions of meat Steinbach used to devour.

But whenever I came to speak about the Labour movement and Socialism, or now about the Russian Revolution, both my friends skilfully dodged the issue.

Another of my shop-mates with whom I occasionally talked was a passionate cyclist; a fifth a mountain-climber; a sixth went fishing every Sunday in the Old Danube beyond the Reichsbrücke—everyone seemed to have a nice hobby, but there appeared to be among them none who was a Socialist. To all of them Uridil, the football star of those days, was certainly more popular than Victor Adler, and the forthcoming football match more important than the Russian Revolution. Most of the girls in our shop were very young, the majority having come straight from elementary school, and certainly had no idea of the Labour movement. Only Anton Bönisch knew something, because we often talked about it. When I, then, in the course of the week following the proclamation of the general strike, asked one or the other of my colleagues what our shop would do, I received embarrassed answers.

This was a distressing experience, and I talked it over with Robert in a rather desperate mood. "If not even the factory workers respond to the call of the Party, who should?" I said sadly.

"They will," Robert tried to console me. "They will in time, rest assured. I bet that even the Putilow workers would not have agreed to a strike proclamation of the Russian Party if it had been issued in September; in October, however, they stood in the forefront of the fighting in St. Petersburg. Every social movement needs its psychological conditions. But," he added pensively,

"every social movement in turn creates its own psychological conditions."

One morning when we arrived at the factory to start work a strange man at the gate slipped a bill into the hand of every one of us; it was an invitation by our trade union to attend a factory meeting. It was to be held in a beer hall next door the following Saturday after work, when most of the employees, having received their pay envelopes, used to take a glass of beer before returning home. There was at first some discussion among the workers in the shop as to whether or not they should go to the meeting; most of them could not see why they should not drink a glass of beer for a change in the restaurant where it was to take place. So they went to the meeting.

There we sat at the tables, a big glass of beer in front of everyone, and Julius Grünwald, the leader of the bookbinders' trade union, addressed us. He began by saying that he knew that our shop was rotten and that most of the workers were not yet organised. But to-day, he said, he would not speak about trade-union matters; greater things were at stake. And then he explained what the parliamentary reform would mean for the workers, and how social legislation would be improved, and how particularly the bookbinders, printers and paper-workers would profit from a greater influence of the working class in Parliament. One of the first things the Party would press forward, he said, would be the abolition of all restrictions on the hawking of books, pamphlets and leaflets (for which, according to the current laws, a police licence was required). This freedom would revive our trade, he said, and better its conditions. And he asked the meeting for permission to inform the manager of our firm on behalf of the workers that they would not work on November 28.

The speech was followed by a short discussion, in which one of the workers mentioned that we were now, as usually before Christmas, working overtime and the firm pressed with orders, so that we could hardly afford to take a day off. Another fellow pointed out that the day off would mean the loss of one day's wage plus two hours' overtime. A third was concerned with whether the firm would retaliate with a lock-out or at least dismiss some of us: I sat there seething with rage, humiliation and despair, and wanted to have a good cry; but I did not dare say what I felt. Leo Kris did not even open his mouth, and I feared that all was lost and that we would not join the strike.

But then Julius Grünwald rose again. While he had spoken rather dryly at the beginning of the meeting, he now spoke with passion.

"Well," he began, "you do not have to strike. Hundreds of

thousands of workers all over Austria will surely strike, but you may break the strike if you like, and may leave it to your fellows and comrades to fight for you. For years they have fought and suffered for you; you have not moved a finger to help them. Why should it be otherwise now? Why?"

He paused for a moment and looked round, and there was a perplexed silence.

"You are no longer underdogs, spat on and despised, but workers with self-respect, and therefore respected," he continued; "for that you have to thank your comrades. Your working hours and wages are regulated by a trade-union contract; for that you have to thank your trade union, of which most of you are not even members. So why shouldn't you continue to harvest what the others have sown?"

He paused again and threw a contemptuous look at me, as if I were the villain.

"But just think," he went on, "whether this ought to be the behaviour of honest workers. Is there not a point of honour of all of you at stake? Will you really remain an inferior in the State, not worthy to be equal?"

Then he spoke about the drama of the Russian Revolution, the heroism of the most wretched workers, who had not only sacrificed more than one day's wage plus two hours' overtime, but had also braved bullets and bludgeons and Siberia.

"Don't you feel that the Russian worker is your brother and that you would fail him in his hour of direst need if you failed to do your duty here?" he said. "Are you so blinded as not to see that wherever in the world, whether in Moscow, Berlin or Vienna, workers are fighting for a little more freedom and a little more human dignity they are fighting for everyone of you as well?"

He finished abruptly and sat down. There was a moment of deathly silence. But suddenly a burst of applause went up, and I could see that our cause had carried the day. I was particularly glad when Josef Navratil rose to say that the preceding questions of his colleagues were not meant to be a refusal to do what was certainly our duty, and that he was sure that all of us would be pleased if Mr. Grünwald would arrange the matter. I ventured to stammer that the apprentices of the firm also regarded it as a point of honour to join the strike and that the trade union should see to it that we could. So it was agreed upon in high spirits that our shop would join the strike as well as the procession.

There was a flash of triumph in Robert's eyes when I told him about our factory meeting.

"Good, very good," he said; "I was almost sure of it, you know," he added.

"How interesting," he proceeded, "that your people did not respond to Grünwald's dreary talk about bread and butter, but that they responded at once when he appealed to their honour and their class-consciousness. You see, in everyone human dignity and a sense of solidarity are inborn; you have to awaken it. That is our job."

The next few days there was a mood of tension and excitement in our shop which increased with the approach of the appointed date. From all sides there were never-ending whispers and discussions about the preparations for the general strike, and every one of us heard the rumours that the Government had concentrated Bosnian and Croatian troops in and round Vienna; or that the artillery was being kept in reserve in the Arsenal; or that live ammunition had been distributed to the police; or that the employers would answer the general strike with a general lock-out; or that a special train under steam would be ready should the Emperor be forced to leave the capital. Most of us seemed to be disappointed when Leo Kris, who now came into his own, with his undisputed reputation as a reader of the *Arbeiter Zeitung* and as a member of the Party, explained to us that all these rumours were just nonsense, and that there would be a peaceful demonstration without any disturbance—and he hinted that he was in the know.

On the morning of November 28 we met at the usual time before the factory gate, dressed in our Sunday best; hardly one of my colleagues was missing. Soon a policeman turned up. From his trouser pocket Leo Kris took a red armband, marking him as a steward, and put it on his left sleeve with an air of great importance; then he walked with almost solemn steps to the policeman and talked to him. He smiled broadly, and the policeman smiled back. Then he formed the procession: four in a row; first the men, then the women, then the girls, and we apprentices at the tail. Then he gave the word of command to go, and slowly we went to the building of the Workers' Health Insurance Office near our shop. The streets surrounding this building were already black with thousands of workers when we arrived, and we had to wait for about half an hour before we could march on, merged as we were with a big stream of workers. From there we turned into the Mariahilferstrasse, a main road of considerable width which slopes down to the Ringstrasse. We could overlook the road in its whole length of half a mile: it was packed with a vast mass carrying red flags and posters, and we moved so slowly that it took an hour to reach the Ringstrasse. At the crossing we had to wait again before we could continue the march, because the Ringstrasse was blocked by a gigantic procession of workers from the



southern and eastern districts of Vienna. Next day we learned from the papers that a quarter of a million had marched in the procession in Vienna, and tens of thousands in Prague, Trieste and Cracow and in hundreds of other cities and towns all over the Empire.

Thus the general strike and the procession were carried out punctually, like a military manoeuvre on the greatest scale. It was the first time in my life that I struck; and it was also the first time that I marched together with other people of my shop, and with workers from all over Vienna, in a political demonstration. It was a strange feeling, of being one of the uncounted masses, marching in step with them, inspired by the same idea. It was a feeling of self-obliteration and, at the same time, of intoxicating strength. It was a feeling of deep happiness. I was in high spirits, and I smiled and laughed and shouted slogans all the way, and looked at my marching fellows as if we were all one big family. While we marched, Baron Gautsch, the Austrian Prime Minister, announced in the Parliament that His Majesty was pleased to approve a Bill providing universal, equal and secret manhood franchise for the Chamber of Representatives. And I flattered myself with the assumption that I had contributed a little to this great victory—I, as an insignificant atom in the ocean of humanity, as a tiny fraction of the power of the working class unleashed in this demonstration. For the first time I had experienced the miraculous mass-feeling and the force of working-class solidarity.

And now it seemed that the day of the harvest of liberty was near. Yesterday, so it appeared, was Russia's turn; to-day ours; tomorrow would be Prussia's and Germany's turn. The working classes all over Europe were on the move.

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CHAPTER FIVE  
OTTO BAUER

"This is the noble mission of the young—  
Earth into being at my bidding sprang;  
The sun in pomp I led up from the sea,  
The moon in all her changes followed me.  
For me in beauty walked the glorious day,  
The green earth blossomed to adorn my way."—Goethe, *Faust*.

AFTER THE four exciting weeks between the proclamation of the general strike and the great procession on November 28 had passed, I longed more than ever before to sit down to study as intensively as conditions permitted. There was no end to the list of books I wanted to read and of the lectures I wanted to attend. It was as though the universe with all its immeasurable marvels had been newly born, as though Copernicus had only recently discovered that the earth was merely a satellite of the sun, and as though Newton had only the day before yesterday defined the law of gravitation.

The Socialist youth of those days, or, at any rate, the circle of friends among whom I moved—apprentices, workers, clerks, students—appeared to be surrounded by an atmosphere of intellectual curiosity and excitement as perhaps the French intellectuals were in the times of Diderot and Voltaire. It was as though the era of enlightenment, with all its reverie and ecstasy, had been revived. Whenever we met, on the street or with common friends, we would discuss with heated passion Marx and Freud, Strindberg and Shaw, Mendel's law of organic inheritance and Planck's Quantum Theory, and would attempt to ascertain the connecting link between the modern conception of nature and history and our conception of Socialism.

Everything was new to me, everything was full of wonder and absorbing interest. I still remember vividly with what utter delight I followed a series of six lectures by Professor Oswald Thomas on astronomy, and a term of lectures by Professor Emil Reich on Ibsen's plays, both delivered to an audience of workers and clerks at the Wiener Volksheim. I can think only with profound gratitude of this seat of working-class education, from which radiated so much inspiration and stimulation in so many fields of knowledge. There young Fritz Saxl, now Professor and Director of the Warburg Institute in London, intro-

duced an enthusiastic audience to the world of art history; there young Victor Stern, who later became, curiously enough, a leader of the Communists in Czechoslovakia, elucidated Berkeley's philosophic thought. Teachers and pupils alike were young, and merged together into a cordial community of cheerful missionaries of their self-appointed task.

The sanctuary for political science, however, was lecture room No. 33 of the Viennese University, an amphitheatre with more than three hundred seats, which, in the season, opened its doors once a week in the evening to let in humble people like myself who were not members of the academic republic. The hall was always packed to capacity when sociologists delivered their lectures, arranged by the Educational Association of Social Science and by the Sociological Association. In awe I listened to the erudition of men whose names were already familiar to me as authors.

But for proper political education our Party was provided with a widespread and complex organisation. Its most important organ was the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, a daily paper on an unusually high intellectual level of the order of the *Manchester Guardian*. Then there was *Die Neue Zeit*, the weekly of the German Social Democratic Party, edited by Karl Kautsky and Gustav Eckstein. It was a rich mine of knowledge in the whole field of the international Labour movement and the development of Socialist thought. In the pages of this remarkable journal the fiercest intellectual battles between the Reformists and Revolutionaries in all parts of the world were waged. The great host of the intellectual leaders of the international movement—Eduard Bernstein, Pleckanoff, Rosa Luxemburg, Trotsky, Mehring, Jean Jaurès, Branting, Vandervelde, Katayama, to name a few of them at random—were its contributors. Thus, from the beginning of my Socialist education I was taught to think in international terms, to understand the differences of conditions under which the working classes of the different countries have to fight, to see the variety of tradition and thought which determine their different conceptions of Socialism, but to conceive, all the same, the Socialist movement in its universality as an indivisible whole.

The deeper meaning of Socialist internationalism was, however, evolved in the pages of *Der Kampf*, a monthly, founded by Otto Bauer, Karl Renner and Adolf Braun in 1907. It was mainly devoted to the special problems of the Austrian Empire with its ten or twelve nations, and to the problems of the nationalities of Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Under Otto Bauer's editorship *Der Kampf* soon gained a high reputation in the inter-

national Socialist world. I remember when its first issue came out, its green cover adorned with the drawing of a worker, his arm propped by a huge hammer which leaned upon an anvil. Its unsigned editorial article expounded in glowing terms Heraclitus' thesis "that all things come into being and pass away through strife", that thesis which underlies the philosophy of evolution from Darwin to Marx; hence the name of the new journal, *Der Kampf* (The Struggle). I read, and preserved as a great treasure, this monthly from its first issue through its twenty-seven years, until it was suppressed by Dollfuss in February 1934: and I regarded it as the highest distinction the Party could bestow upon me when Friedrich Adler, who succeeded Otto Bauer in the editorship at the beginning of the war in 1914 (since Bauer had to join the forces), entrusted me with its editorship in 1923.

Apart from the literature of political education, the central educational office of the Party also provided amply for those who would learn by ear. Every day the *Arbeiter Zeitung* contained one or two columns in small print announcing lectures on political subjects all over Vienna. I had not many evenings to spare for these lectures, but whenever and wherever in Vienna a lecture by Otto Bauer was announced, I unfailingly turned up.

When I joined the Socialist movement in the autumn of 1905, Otto Bauer's amazing renown as its most erudite and acute thinker was already firmly established; at this time he was twenty-four years of age. One year later he finished a scholarly work on the nature and character of nations; it is, to my mind, the most profound contribution of the Marxian school of thought to social science. At the age of twenty-six he became secretary of the Socialist Parliamentary group, editor of *Der Kampf*, and a member of the editorial staff of the *Arbeiter Zeitung*. At thirty-seven he became Foreign Secretary of the Austrian Republic and the undisputed leader of the Party; he was respected in the Socialist movement all over the world also as a great leader of international Socialism.

It was the forceful forehead, with a deep furrow over the left arch of his bushy eyebrows, which attracted my attention when I saw him for the first time in a large, crowded meeting-hall; he sat on the platform at the corner of a big table, smoking a cigarette. The chairman introduced him to the audience with unusual reverence and cordiality as "our young Doctor".

Otto Bauer rose, put out his cigarette, moved slowly before the desk and began speaking. He spoke for about one and a half hours; I have never heard before or since an orator of his vigour. He spoke in a noble, dignified language in which

never a vulgar expression intruded; and emphatic phrases and picturesque epithets seemed also to be alien to him. His eloquence was rapid and flowed from a source of grandeur and extraordinary knowledge. The unfolding of the subject of his speech appeared to follow an almost mathematical procedure: with a few bold strokes he outlined the facts, moved from the facts to the first proposition, from the first general proposition to the inference, from the first inference to the next proposition, and so on until the problem under consideration was perfectly clarified and the listener persuaded. He possessed, indeed, the rare gift of making complicated things simple. His lucidity of mind enabled him to explain the most intricate economic or sociological problem intelligibly for every intelligent worker; the crystal clarity of the structure of his speeches made them also unforgettable.

What amazed me most when I listened to his speeches was his wonderful brain. He did not use any notes, and he never paused in his speech—facts and thoughts flowed in a ceaseless stream, well ordered, well proportioned, imprinting the contours and even many of the details of the problem under discussion upon the memory of his audience. Often good speeches are not good reading; Otto Bauer's orations were spoken essays. He spoke just as he wrote, and he wrote just as he spoke; and his essays and speeches were alike distinguished by originality of thought, strength of logic, persuasive force of language, and, above all, by the wide scope of his mind.

When I listened to him for the first time—in awe and admiration, of course—I felt at once that from now on my life was bound to his and that there was no escape for me from the domination of his genius. And indeed I followed him like a shadow all through his life, and the more I learned from him the stronger grew my affection and respect. He appeared to master the social sciences in their whole compass: economy, sociology, philosophy and, above all, history. He would lecture one evening on the structure of the Russian village community, next evening on Marx's theory of value, at another time on the interrelations between capitalist expansion and philosophical thought. He would explain the evolution of every social phenomenon, on which he reflected; he would integrate it into the totality of the historic process and would measure its effects on the changes in the texture of society and the relations of classes. In Otto Bauer's teaching present and past history melted into a whole, moulded by the reciprocal effects of technology, economy, class-struggle and political and philosophic thought. When, in his main work,\* he investigated the nature of the phenomenon of the nation, he

\* *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*, xxviii + 576 pp., 2nd edition.  
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showed in a brilliant analysis how, on the basis of its biological substance, modified by migration and mixture of blood, its character has been shaped in the course of centuries by the technological, economic and historic conditions of its life; how, in turn, those conditions have determined its philosophy and psychology; and how, then, common experience in the past has produced certain habits of thinking and feeling distinguished from the habits and feelings of other nations. He saw, perhaps more clearly than any other Socialist of his time, in every social phenomenon the lineaments which the history of past generations had imprinted upon it. He analysed even philosophical thoughts in their historical and social context, as reflecting only a stage in the process through which the world is passing in eternal changes.\* He saw history in the totality of its social, economic, political and cultural interrelations. And he never tired of discovering in the present traces of the past.

So in his teaching past history became alive in our own experience and destiny; the tradition of generations, deceased centuries before, assumed a new, deeper meaning in our thought, and the wisdom of men of vanished civilisations was revived in our conception of life. He stimulated the feeling that nothing that ever happened in the world of nature as well as the world of thought is without significance for our present life. T. L. Beddoes, in one of his most beautiful verses, compared the human mind, with the knowledge of the past, to a single eye receiving the light of the stars:

"How glorious to live! Even in one thought  
The wisdom of past times to fit together,  
And from the luminous minds of many men  
Catch a reflected truth; as, in one eye,  
Light, from unnumbered worlds and farthest planets  
Of the star-crowded universe, is gathered  
Into one ray."

Something of this vision seemed to me materialised in Otto Bauer's mind.

There was, however, still another force which radiated from him and which evoked my profoundest affection, that force which Aristotle has called the "energy of the soul". Otto Bauer was tireless in his search for knowledge and truth; but he was still more assiduous in his search for the "good life" of human society. He was a great scholar, yet still more a reformer. He wanted not only to understand, to conceive and to interpret the world; he wanted to change it. He put his erudition into the service of the cause of Socialism. He worked as a scholar all his life;

\* *Das Weltbild des Kapitalismus in Der lebendige Marxismus*, vol. II, 1928.

his books, and essays worth preserving, would fill a spacious shelf. But he always subordinated his researches to the needs of the Labour movement. He indulged in writing for mere intellectual pleasure only twice in his life: in 1912, when he wrote a comprehensive study on the *Accumulation of Capital*,\* discussing Rosa Luxemburg's work of the same title; and then during the First World War, when, as a prisoner of war in a Siberian camp, he wrote a study on the interrelations between the rise of capitalism and philosophical thought (*Das Weltbild des Kapitalismus*). The subjects of all his other writings were dictated solely by emergencies in the social struggles of the day.

It was this singleness of purpose which marked Otto Bauer's speeches and writings; it was the urgency of the workers' class struggle which evoked their absorbing interest; it was the warmth of the great social aim with which they were imbued which appealed so strongly to the passion of his pupils. We felt that to him life would not be worth living, and even learning would perhaps appear meaningless, if there were not the perception of a new world to come. He derived this perception from his learning and philosophical speculations; from his moral impulse he evolved the resolve to materialise it. This concord of intellect and morality produced a noble vision of Socialism. Though he derived his Socialist conception from a sober analysis of the dynamics of modern economy, with its social, national and psychological implications, it appeared (at least to me) in a Messianic hue.

I of course longed ardently to enter somehow into personal relations with the man whom I admired so much, and after overcoming my shyness I wrote him a letter saying that I would be very grateful if he would be good enough to give me a word of advice as to how to read and learn social science and history a little more systematically. Two days later I received a postcard from him, asking me to come and see him at his house the following Sunday afternoon.

He lived with his parents in Alsergrond, Liechtenstein Strasse 32, near to my home, in an unpretentious middle-class, four-storey dwelling-house. His flat was on the second floor. His father, a grave-looking man in his early sixties, spectacled, with a grey, pointed beard, opened the door when I knocked, and when I told him of my appointment, he called for his son. Otto Bauer appeared, and showed me the way through a spacious old-fashioned dining-room to his study. There, in the corner on the right of its single window, stood an American slide-top office desk; in another corner at the back wall was a brass bed; the whole

\* Published as a supplement of *Die Neue Zeit*, 1912.

wall opposite the desk and the bed was covered with bookcases, and above them, like a frieze, was a big framed cartoon of allegorical figures. In the middle of his room was a square table covered with black linoleum. I noticed at the foot of his bed a pair of dumb-bells, and I wondered whether he really exercised with them.

After I had taken a seat he asked me very sympathetically about the conditions of my work in the shop, what sort of work I was actually doing, and how I was getting along with my shop-mates. Then he asked me how I was getting on in the youth group of which I had recently been elected chairman. Then he wanted to know what I had read of Socialist literature, and, offering me a cigarette, he remarked that I must be keen on hearing lectures, for he had noticed me at several meetings he had addressed.

The picture of my reading and learning which I gave him must have been highly confusing, for he said that I would have to bring a little order into my reading and would have to work a little more in accordance with a plan. "Everything you wish to learn is good; but to proceed along a definite line towards a defined goal is perhaps better still," he said.

"If it is astronomy in which you are chiefly interested," he went on, "then you would do well to begin by studying mathematics and physics—that is very useful and of absorbing interest. But I'm not quite sure that that is what you have in mind," he added.

I replied that I was indeed very much interested in astronomy, and also in biology, sociology, literature, history of art, philosophy and economics, and especially in Marx and Goethe, but that I wanted, above all, to study history and Socialist thought, and that the trouble was that I had so little time to spare for reading.

He listened attentively and seemingly amused, for a spark of mirth flashed up in his eyes, and he said with an almost paternal tenderness, "Come on, you must not worry, you'll be all right. You are lucky," he proceeded, "for you are still very young, and before you lies a long life. You must not get impatient.

"Let us start with a little history," he suggested. "You need not begin with Grotius, Mommsen and Gibbon" (the authors I had mentioned I would like to read); "those authors you ought, of course, to read, but later on. First read something about the great periods of social transformation in modern times—for instance, Kautsky's *Thomas More* and *Die Wiedertäufer*, Bernstein's *Die englische Revolution*, Zimmermann's and Engels' books on the peasant wars. And then proceed to the history of the French Revolution and the revolutions of the nineteenth century."



He then explained how the revolutionary ideas and movements from Thomas More in the sixteenth century up to the Russian Revolution, unfolding before our eyes, expressed the same social substance: the dissolution of the feudal society and the rise of the middle classes to power. And again, as always when I listened to his lectures, the darkness of vanished worlds was all at once lightened up by a new brightness that was full of significance for our present.

He finally asked me to come to see him whenever I wanted to, and he dismissed me with a hearty handshake.

When I left him, I felt that I had met a truly great man. And strolling home I recalled to my mind every minute detail of our talk, every word I had said, and still more those he had said.

The seriousness with which he had talked to me made me deeply grateful. I was only an insignificant boy, hardly sixteen, but he had spoken to me about the great affairs of humanity with the same earnestness as if speaking to a man of his own standing or, at any rate, to a mature man. He did not scoff when I disclosed the childlike ambitions of the scope of my learning; he did not smile when I assured him with the gravity of an adolescent that all my learning was, of course, designed solely to serve the "cause". I did not, I felt, appear in his eyes as a ridiculous "world reformer", as my father had rather jocularly called me, but as a youth who was apparently honestly striving for the right way of life. I felt that however confusedly I had expressed my yearnings for knowledge and my enthusiasm for Socialism, he had understood me and had recognised the purity of the motives which moved me. That encouraged me immensely. For that I thanked him with all my heart.

I recalled also the warmth of the tone with which he had spoken to me, sometimes emphasising the meaning of a word with his delicate fingers, and I recalled his luminous eyes, with which he watched me when I told him excitedly about some ideas to which I had been inspired by a book.

This feeling of thankfulness was all the stronger because I knew, from my friend Robert, that Otto Bauer, like Victor Adler and Robert Danneberg, had cast off his own class of wealth and comfort in order to serve unselfishly the cause of the poor. His father, though he looked like a non-Jewish intellectual in the higher ranks of the civil service, was a Jewish textile manufacturer who had only recently migrated from North Bohemia to Vienna. His factory was in Warnsdorf, his home in Reichenberg, a big town near Warnsdorf, where many of the Warnsdorf manufacturers lived. There, in Reichenberg, close to the German

border, Otto Bauer was born and had attended the elementary and secondary schools. There, as a boy of sixteen, he had preached the gospel of Socialism to workers. He migrated with his family to Vienna, because he wanted to study at Vienna University, and, above all, he wanted to be near the centre of the Labour movement. For to serve it was his well-considered plan, conceived when he was still at the secondary school. And so Otto Bauer, like Victor Adler, gave the movement without question all that he had inherited, and he lived on the modest income of an official of the Party.

Otto Bauer, thus, appeared to me almost as the embodiment of Socialist idealism in its profundity of thought, in its beauty of aims and in its readiness for self-sacrifice. Even his countenance, which I had attentively studied when I sat opposite him, seemed to reflect the grace of the idea to which he had devoted his life.

I was therefore much surprised when a friend of mine, with whom I had once talked about Otto Bauer, remarked that his features by no means betrayed the brilliance of his mind; my friend thought he looked as insignificant as a small Jewish merchant. But, however intently I examined Otto Bauer's face, I could not agree that my friend was right. It is true that Otto Bauer's features were unmistakably Jewish, but, though not uncommonly handsome, they were of that impressive manly intellect and energy which beautifies Jewish faces, especially in Central Europe. The bold curve of his chin harmonised well with the tender lines of his mouth and, above all, with the vigour of his forehead and the gleam of his dark eyes. At any rate, as the lover always sees radiant beauty in the face of the beloved, so I, for one, saw in Otto Bauer's face only the beauty of strength and spirituality.

The talk with Otto Bauer in his home made a lasting impression on me. I believed, from the kind way he had spoken to me and the concern he had seemingly shown for my spiritual development, that he was not disinterested in me; I felt that from now on his eyes would watch over me and would scrutinise all my doings. So I felt that I had burdened myself with an increased responsibility for my self-education and demeanour. "You must not fail him in his expectations," I kept saying to myself as I went home from his house: "you must become worthy of his friendship."

My acquaintance with Otto Bauer, which developed into a great friendship and intimate collaboration for twenty years until he died in 1938, was from the beginning, and remained for me through my whole life, a wonderful source of moral fortitude and inexhaustible inspiration.

## CHAPTER SIX

### LEARNING AND WANDERING

"And now before my eyes expands the ocean  
With all its bays, in shining sleep."—Goethe, *Faust*.

THE GREAT procession in November 1905 and the victorious outcome of the struggle for parliamentary reform had considerably changed the mood among the workers in my shop. Although to my knowledge none of them joined the Social Democratic Party, or became a reader of the *Arbeiter Zeitung* (because it was dearer than the popular papers and intellectually on too high a level to be easily read), a great number of the men and some of the women joined the trade union, and almost all of them felt, and proclaimed that they were in fact, genuine Social Democrats. It appeared as if the great procession had awakened them and had made them political-minded. They now liked to discuss political topics, and I could now freely, without embarrassing anyone, pour out what I felt I had to say, and preach the Messianic gospel of Socialism. While Leo Kris, respected as he was by all our colleagues as an experienced Socialist partisan, preferred to dwell on sober elucidations of the actual political situation, I was eager to relate it (as I believed I had learned from Otto Bauer) to the far wider scope of the working-class struggle and its final aims.

Going to the factory had never given me a feeling of frustration, because I liked to work with my hands, and enjoyed in particular the kind of work I had to do. I complained, of course, at having to get up at a quarter to six in the morning, and I complained, also, that the shop took up a little too much of my time; but I never complained of having to go to the shop.

But now the shop had become an attraction; it was almost a second home, like the youth group in which I worked. I regarded my shop-mates as friends and fellows of my creed, and our mutual relations became intimate as never before. Now I had a twofold enjoyment in my job: in its political as well as in its artisan side.

The sixty-odd hours a week that the job kept me busy forced me to make the utmost use of my spare time. I had to do some organisational work in the youth group of which I was chairman; I had to attend some political meetings and I liked to attend lectures; every day I had to read the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, every week

*Die Neue Zeit*, every month *Der Kampf*, in addition to all the books I wanted to read, and I had to see friends to discuss with them what I had read; I was fond of seeing the beautiful paintings in the fine Viennese galleries and of going to a good concert; I longed to climb the mountains. So I was always in a terrific hurry (except when involved in political or philosophical debates). Every fraction of a minute had to be usefully employed, according to a well-thought-out time-table. Waste of time was a horror in my eyes.

This intense, full life pleased me immensely. I was healthy, physically strong, and hardened by a little mountaineering and a lot of heavy work in the factory allocated to apprentices; I did not need much sleep; I never felt tired. It was as if enthusiasm had multiplied my strength.

Now I wanted to put it to a new test. Of all the educational institutions of the Party, the Arbeiter Schule, a Marxian labour college, was on the highest level and the most respected. I wished with all my heart to be admitted. I knew that the Arbeiter Schule would mean additional hard work. I knew that it would considerably increase the amount of my studies. I knew that the heavenly time of reading books to my heart's content, picked up more or less at random, would come to an end. I would have to read, and to absorb thoroughly, a great many of the most complex books on economics and philosophy, to be able to follow the lectures to advantage. I would have, to a greater degree than hitherto, to concentrate all my spare energy on learning. I was willing to do it.

I was, however, not quite sure whether I would have a chance of being admitted, because I was only a little over sixteen, and only about seventy were elected from among the many who sent in applications. I talked the question over with Otto Bauer (who, together with Robert Danneberg, examined the applications), and he encouraged me to try my luck. It did not fail me. So I attended the Arbeiter Schule from September 1907 onwards for two years.

The school, held in a hall of the Labour Health Insurance Office in the Königseckgasse, was attended by young workers and clerks, up to the age of about thirty, who were already active on the political or industrial side of the Labour movement; among the students were also a small number of trade-union officials. The lectures, twice a week, from seven till nine in the evening, were designed to introduce the students to the social sciences and to guide their self-education.

There, in a course spread over two years, Otto Bauer lectured on economic history and economic theory, explaining in particular

the first volume of Marx's *Capital*. Karl Renner, later Prime Minister of the Austrian Republic, lectured on political thought from Hobbes and Locke through Rousseau and Montesquieu to Marx and Lassalle. Max Adler, later Professor at the University of Vienna, lectured on Marx's philosophy of the State in the light of Hegel's idealistic school of thought. Adolf Braun, then industrial editor of the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, and later a member of the German Reichstag and Secretary to the German Social Democratic Party, lectured on the theory and practice of trade unionism. For one term, Fritz Winter, legal adviser of the Party, lectured on the constitution of Austria and her social laws.

This team of lecturers was perhaps the most brilliant the Marxian school had ever produced. Everyone in it had contributed one or two outstanding books to his field of learning, everyone (except Adolf Braun) was a stimulating teacher, and everyone was still fairly young (in the late twenties or early thirties), though to me they seemed in the prime of their lives.

The teachers encouraged the students to take complete notes on the lectures, to read attentively and thoughtfully particular books or specific chapters of them, and to elaborate on lectures and books as fully as possible. At the end of almost every lecture there was a debate between students and teachers on what we had learned in the preceding lecture or on what we had read in the books related to the subject under discussion. I had to work under a great strain to answer the exacting demands of the school, yet I did it with the utmost devotion. At long last I was gratefully enjoying the proper, methodical education I had always wanted.

It was also most gratifying to me as a pupil to get into closer relations with my teachers, whom I respected so much as scholars. Certainly I would put none of them above Otto Bauer's genius and personality. Yet I was impressed not only by Karl Renner's scope of knowledge and the clarity of his mind, but also by the extraordinary circumstances of his rise in life. He was the son of a very poor Moravian peasant; he had, literally, to starve through his secondary school and University studies, living on a few shillings he occasionally earned as a private tutor. But the hardships he had to endure in his youth had apparently never impeded his passion for learning, nor his enjoyment of life. Although he had nothing to live on, he married at the age of about twenty, when still a student. When I met him for the first time at the school, he already looked prosperous, being a librarian of the Reichsrat, a member of Parliament and a respected scholar in political law. He was extremely fond of good food and good drink, as was apparent from the first glance at his stout figure and full face, with rosy cheeks and a black beard. He appeared

to be always cheerful, a cheerfulness which seemed to spring from the enjoyment of the good things of life. However, when making a speech he had the air and wisdom of a great statesman. And, indeed, a statesman he was.

Max Adler's erudition, too, awed me; also his flowery and emotional language appealed to me, though I was not always able to follow his complicated trains of thought. There was, however, something strange and gloomy in his distinctly oriental features, perhaps some hidden bitterness and suffering, or fanaticism. I cannot remember having heard him laugh during the almost thirty years I knew him; at the very best a shadow of a smile would slip over his melancholy mouth.

The most beloved among our teachers was undoubtedly Adolf Braun. He was the very opposite of an orator—in fact, he could not speak in public. His rapid outbursts of words were sometimes quite unintelligible. He was very nervous when speaking; his hands never rested for a moment, but were incessantly describing the most curious curves in the air, and when delivering his lecture standing, his legs were interminably on the move—either swinging up and down on his toes, or crossing one over the other, or kicking in turn his right toe with the heel of his left foot and his left toe with the heel of his right foot. Yet every word he spoke was so full of common sense, was imbued with such a warmth of feeling and sincerity that it commanded the utmost attention and deepest sympathy. There was an irresistible charm in the childlike brightness and cheerfulness of his sky-blue eyes. It was the cheerfulness of a truly good man, and one could not help loving him.

In the autumn of 1909 I had served my time as an apprentice—three and a half years. I decided to stay on until spring, to save some money, and then to become a temporary tramp to “see a little of the world”. I felt I could do this with impunity, because I thought I had used my time fairly well. I had learned my trade, had attended the Arbeiter Schule, had studied strenuously, had served my youth group as chairman, and had even founded, and led for a time, the Alsergrund group of the Union of Temperance Workers.

The “alcohol question”, as it was then called, occupied much of my thought at this time. I was first inspired to think about it by a lecture which Oscar Kurz, a doctor, and later one of the co-founders of the Austrian Socialist Medical Association, delivered to a meeting of my youth group. He emphasised that alcohol, consumed in quantities in beer, wine or brandy, is not only bad because it impairs the health, but mainly because it weakens our moral stature in our fight for Socialism.

"The fight for Socialism," he said, "requires the highest moral standing of all our comrades. If we condemn the present capitalist order of society on moral grounds," he went on, "then we must offer to the world the vision of a society on a higher moral level. If we regard alcoholism as a wicked outgrowth of capitalist society, then we must not accept this vice in our private lives."

And he quoted Lassalle's famous appeal in his *Arbeiterprogramm* to the workers: "Neither the vices of the oppressed nor the idle distraction of the thoughtless, nor even the innocuous frivolities of the insignificant become you any more. For you are the rock on which shall be built the church of our time."

"One is not a good Socialist," Oscar Kurz added, "merely because one wants to have a better life, not alone for oneself, but also for others. To be a good Socialist means to strive not only for a better, but still more for a dignified, life."

"We hate capitalism," he said, "because we believe that its immanent conditions deprive the many of their inborn human dignity. We long for Socialism because we believe that it will produce the conditions under which everyone can enjoy human dignity."

"If we feel in ourselves—as every Socialist does—the call to create a nobler human society," he concluded, and the colour rushed to his delicate, ethereal face, "then we must already, here and now, in our private lives, show that we are worthy of the call. A drunken Socialist, rolling in the gutter, is hardly a worthy partisan of the noble idea of Socialism."

Oscar Kurz's speech appealed very strongly to me. The fight for Socialism, I pondered, is certainly in the first place a fight against misery, injustice and ignorance; but it is, fundamentally, a fight for a higher life, or at any rate a fight for a higher order of life. It imposes therefore some moral duties upon every Socialist, and surely the least of them is simply to forgo the small pleasure of drinking, which, if it becomes a habit, ruins life and soul.

Alcoholism in Austria was indeed a real plague at this time. It was especially the workers who were infected by it. The lower the income and the standard of living the more easily they fell a victim to it. The appalling spread of this disease was caused principally by the abominable housing conditions of the Viennese working class; but ignorance and habit also contributed.

When Oscar Kurz, then, in the course of the discussion which followed his speech, proposed the formation of a group of abstainers, I immediately responded to his appeal and took it upon myself to organise it, performing a function in the Labour movement for the first time in my life. (The very first article I had ever published in *Der jugendliche Arbeiter*, 1906, dealt also with the

alcohol question and the Socialist movement.) By my conversion to abstinence I did not sacrifice anything I regretted, because I never drank alcohol, except at meetings where everyone, and therefore I, too, ordered a glass of beer.

Oscar Kurz disclosed to us also that Victor Adler, who used to drink beer before going to bed, and also occasionally cognac before making a speech, had renounced drinking when over forty years of age. He did it avowedly not for his own sake—because he never lost control over himself—but because he wanted to harmonise his own behaviour with what he thought ought to be the behaviour of the workers.

Victor Adler's propaganda against alcoholism culminated in a great speech before the Austrian Trade Unions Congress in 1907, about two years after Oscar Kurz's lecture to our group. He put the question very simply.

"We cannot attain Socialism," he said, "if we do not make the working class mentally and physically fit for the fight for Socialism.

"The brain is the most important weapon in our fight. Alcohol destroys it.

"Alcohol frustrates not only the life of the individual, but also the life of the Labour movement itself.

"I have been converted to total abstinence," he said, "not by doctors and professors, but by those of my comrades who have brought sorrows upon me and disgrace upon the Party. I do not know any trouble in our Party in which alcohol has not played a decisive part."

And he appealed to the sense of honour and self-respect, especially of the militant Socialists, to combat alcoholism in the ranks of the Labour movement by setting a personal example.

"We have our own honour as the vanguard of the working class," he said. "We have our own nobility. And its foremost moral principle is to devote all our spiritual and physical strength to the services of our holy cause and to the holy struggle of the working class."\*

In the days before the 1914 war Austrian Socialists, and even the leaders of the Socialist movement, could without embarrassment speak of "our holy cause" and "our holy struggle", because every Socialist still believed that he stood for something sacred. In the Socialist movement before the First World War there was still some of the spirit which also inspired Keir Hardie's conception of Socialism, as J. Bruce Glasier, Hardie's most devoted disciple, has interpreted it in his *Meaning of Socialism*.

"Historically," Bruce Glasier said in the concluding chapter of his book, "Socialism is more closely related to religious than

\* Victor Adler, *Aufsätze, Reden und Briefe*, vol. III, p. 39.



political propagandism. It is from the prophets, apostles and saints, the religious mystics and heretics, rather than from statesmen, economists and political reformers, that the Socialist movement derives its examples and ideas. . . . Socialism means not only the socialisation of wealth, not only the socialisation of means of production and distribution, but our lives, our hearts—ourselves.”

The sources of ethics which inspired British Socialism were, of course, different from those of German and Austrian Socialism. British Socialism derived its ethics mainly from Nonconformity and Puritanism; German Socialism (which had strongly influenced Austrian Socialist thought) derived its ethics from Kant, Fichte and St. Simon. It was, as Benedetto Croce observed, “unconsciously fed in its depths on the new religion, the religion of thought, criticism and liberty”.\* The Austrian Socialists glorified in their anthem Giordano Bruno, the great heretic who braved the Church at the stake, and regarded Thomas Münzer, the Communist leader of the German Anabaptists, as one of the precursors of modern Socialism. There was a strong ethical element in the Socialist conception as held by the Socialists before the 1914 war, and when Victor Adler appealed to it he knew that he would arouse a response from the depth of the feelings of the masses.

Victor Adler’s call had indeed far-reaching effects on the morale of the Austrian Labour movement. Most of the Socialist leaders—Karl Seitz, later mayor of Vienna, Otto Bauer, Friedrich Adler, Hugo Breitner, Professor Julius Tandler, Julius Deutsch—joined the ranks of the abstainers; even in the rank and file of the movement not to be an abstainer and to drink in public was bad form. Above all, the many thousands of boys and girls in the Socialist youth movement grew up in a fighting spirit against alcoholism. It affected the behaviour of a whole generation. After the First Great War there was a rapid decrease in drunkenness among the working people in Austria, and from this point of view it can truthfully be said that the Austrian Labour movement between the two world wars was the most sober of all Labour movements in the world.

This fighting spirit against alcoholism had, of course, nothing to do with Puritanism in its vulgar sense. I, for one, yearned for the joys of life, and though I did not insist very strongly on good food and the common comforts of life, I was all the more eager for the enjoyment of other good things, in particular mountaineering and travelling.

So, in the early spring of 1910, with my friend Anton Bönisch,

\* Benedetto Croce, *History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 303.

I set out rambling through the Austrian Alps. We covered the whole length of more than five hundred miles from the Rax near Vienna to Bregenz at Lake Constance. We crossed woodlands, rocky ramparts and sparkling glaciers; we rested on pasture-land blazing with myriads of marigolds and cyclamen, and on slopes scarlet with alpine roses or glowing with a dark-blue sea of gentians. Strolling on the mossy carpet through silent forests of firs and silver pines we would suddenly see a herd of deer in the twilight mist of the evening. We slept in haystacks, or sometimes in caves, or beneath an overhanging crag, and we bathed in torrents and alpine ponds. We lived on bread, butter, cheese and sausages that we bought in the last village we had passed, and for days we would see no one but lonely herdsmen with their grazing cows. In these serene surroundings I could think of no better reading than Goethe's *Faust*, a pocket copy of which I had with me, of course, interpreting Nature, as I now experienced and felt it so fully, as the manifestation of the vast and mysterious forces of the world. There dawned in my innermost consciousness the perception that there was, as Wordsworth sang:

"Something  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and the mind of man;—  
A motion and a spirit, which impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things."

At Bregenz, Anton and I parted; he went to Germany, while I returned to Vienna, to start immediately from there, with Robert Lackenbacher's younger brother Ernst, on a trip to Italy. We first went by boat down the Danube to Budapest, where we spent a week sight-seeing as the guest of Ernst's uncle, then by slow train to Fiume, the big port of the Adriatic.

It was at the end of August, and a torrid heat seared the endless rye plain, interspersed with cornflowers and poppies, which our train crossed. When we awakened early next morning, the train was winding down the ridge of the Karst to the harbour, and for the first time in my life I experienced the overwhelming view of the sea, silvery grey, glittering in the rays of the rising sun, spread into the infinite before our feet.

On a cargo-boat we went to Bari, Catania and Malta, and from there to Messina (which was still in ruins after the terrible earthquake of Christmas 1909) and Palermo. It was to me as if we were sailing through a fairyland. Hitherto I had only known the pale sky north of the Alps and the majestic serenity of its mountains. Now here, for the first time in my life, I saw a sky glowing in

colours and sparkling in lights of an unknown intensity and, emerging from the purplish-blue sea, hills and meadows of a sweetness and loveliness as painted in the Odyssey. For the first time in my life I saw sea-gulls and dolphins. The most magnificent edifices of architecture I had hitherto known were cathedrals in German Gothic with its towers and spires, shooting up sharp-pointed in the infinite, with stained glass in their vast arched windows, and with sculptures, columns and turrets, luxuriating like tropical forests. Now here, in Palermo, I saw new great things. For the first time I saw Byzantine mosaics on the gigantic walls and Norman vaults of Montereal, works of art of unique splendour.

Ernst Lackenbacher was not only a good, but also a very intelligent fellow. He had just won his high-school certificate, and had long before planned this journey as an extensive study of art history. So we went from Palermo to Naples and Rome. He was a perfect guide through the art treasures of these two cities.

But perhaps more than the ancient marbles and the paintings of the Italian Renaissance, Rome's architecture impressed me as the petrified reflection of history and man's striving for the beautiful through more than fifty generations. With a strange feeling I looked down from the Capitol on the colossal ruins of the Forum Romanum, which was once the very heart of the proudest empire of the then known world; or, stepping down from the hill, on the ancient frieze of the Titus Arch displaying Vespasian's triumphal procession after his conquest of Jerusalem; or, half a mile away, on the fantastic remains of the Colosseum which Vespasian had built with the slave work of twelve thousand Jewish prisoners of war, and which was opened by Titus with a worthy celebration at which three thousand gladiators were torn to pieces by five thousand lions, tigers and other beasts; there, on the erratic blocks of the Colosseum, the blood of the early Christian martyrs was shed, and the rains of nineteen hundred years could not wash it away.

The history of early Christianity was at this time the subject of some of my readings and serious thought. What struck me most deeply was the similarity between some of the traits of the philosophy of early Christianity and of the modern Socialist movement.

A few months before I left Vienna, Karl Kautsky's *Ursprung des Christentums* was published. He showed by an analysis of the religious current of that time and of the social structure of the Roman slave society how the Christian conception took root in the mood of thought and feeling of the disinherited and oppressed, because it reflected their hopes and yearnings for liberation from

their misery. Their belief in the equality of men, in the brotherhood of men, in the eternity of justice, in the solidarity of the poor, in the hatred of the rich, and in the consoling Messianic promise, that in the Christian realm to come those who are first now shall be last and those who are last now shall be first—these beliefs and hopes and yearnings were the natural reaction of an oppressed class. What I derived from Kautsky's analysis (which appeared to me when re-reading it thirty years later a little too crude and perhaps vulgar), as well as from Lujo Brentano's *Die wirtschaftlichen Lehren des christlichen Altertums*, which I read, stimulated by Kautsky's book, was the strongest affirmation of my Socialist belief, but also the certainty of its materialisation. Socialism, as I understood it, embraced not only the Christian ethics, already fully developed in the Hebrew Scriptures, but it contained also the reassurance of its final triumph, because it aimed at a goal which could be attained under the conditions of modern technology. The social vision of early Christianity could not be materialised under the conditions of ancient technology and the structure of ancient society; it had therefore to be transferred from the mundane sphere to the celestial. The modern Socialist idea had not to be cloaked in any mystical garb, because it emerged from the economic, social and moral needs of modern society.

To me, Christianity was the most staggering of riddles. How did this pure, humble, honest faith of the powerless and poor become the most stupendous instrument of domination in the hands of the mighty and rich? I became once more conscious of the striking contrast between idea and reality when I entered St. Peter's Cathedral, shining in marble and gold—this enormous, gorgeous church which was built on the very spot where Saint Peter, that poor and humble fisherman, was beheaded for the confession of his Christian creed. And I recalled St. Bernhard's bitter lamentation: "The Church is resplendent in her walls, beggarly in her poor. She clothes her stones in gold, and leaves her sons naked." Whenever I listened to Bach's *Mass in B Minor* or to Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, I wondered whether the faith in Socialism would ever become so profound as to inspire a great composer to create an oratorio in homage to the Socialist idea. But I never felt the wish to see the idea of Socialism expressed in such a sumptuous monument as this cathedral. It seemed like the symbol of the triumphant mundane power of the Roman Church, as the manifestation of the proud and imperious Church Militant, which believed it would "merit heaven by making earth a hell"; which waged and instigated wars, slew Monophysites, Arians, Iconoclasts and Huguenots,

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which burnt the Lollards, Hussites, Protestants and Jews, which "contrived", as Lord Acton once observed, "murder and massacre on the most cruel and inhuman scale", and was the driving force against any attempt of men to rise from the darkness of superstition to the pure light of reason.

For nine months after my wanderings through Italy I lived and worked as a gilder in Geneva. I chose this town partly for its mountainous surroundings, partly for a romantic sentiment I felt then for Rousseau. Inspired by Karl Renner's lectures on Rousseau's political thought at the Arbeiter Schule, I had read Rousseau's *Contrat Social* and his *Confessions*; so I wanted to live for a while where Rousseau was born. I also wanted to learn from Switzerland the working of her democracy, and to see how three (or even four) nations could live together in a State without hating and fighting each other.

Then I returned to Vienna to prepare for an "intelligence examination", required for serving with the army (under conscription) one year instead of three. Having passed the examination, I immediately joined the artillery. Then, after this year of military service, I went without delay, with a letter of introduction from Otto Bauer to Rudolf Hilferding, to Berlin to "study" the German Labour movement.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### FABIANISM VERSUS REVOLUTION

"All ideas that have immense results are always simple."—Tolstoi, *War and Peace*.

BEFORE THE First World War none of the Socialist movements in Europe could match the stature of the German Social Democratic Party. It commanded the allegiance of hundreds of thousands of members; it co-operated closely with trade unions, whose membership was then over one and a half million; a third of the total electorate of the nation was at the back of it; it preached its Socialist ideas through scores of dailies and hundreds of other periodicals. It was the most powerful Socialist Party in the world.

Yet its intellectual influence was even greater. It really had a philosophy: the philosophy of Karl Marx. The Marxian ideology radiated from the German Social Democratic Party and fascinated

Socialists all over the world. There is a characteristic testimony to the Marxian influence on the intellectuals of the day. It is written by the philosopher of Liberalism, Benedetto Croce, in connection with his essays on Marxism;\* he said: "This intercourse with the literature of Marxism and the eagerness with which for some time I followed the Socialist Press of Germany and Italy, gave me a feeling of political enthusiasm, yielding a strange taste of newness to me; I was like a man who, having fallen in love for the first time when no longer young, should observe in himself the mysterious process of the new passion". Still stronger, it could be imagined, was the enthusiasm which Marxism generated among the avowed Socialists.

Almost every Socialist Party, at any rate on the European mainland, proclaimed its adherence to Marx's doctrines; but in none of them was there a stronger endeavour than in the German Socialist movement to preserve the purity of the Marxian faith in a tireless re-examination of the Marxian theories.

Marx's philosophy contained a very powerful element of messianic prophecy. From his investigation of the nature of the capitalist economy and its inherent laws, Marx came to the conclusion that the capitalist economy was bound to produce crises on an ever-growing scale. These crises, Marx predicted, would increase the acuteness of class antagonisms and the class struggle; they would culminate in revolutions; they would ultimately bring the working class into power. When once the working class attained the power of the State, it would change the fundamentals of the economic system and transform the capitalist society into a Socialist one. For Socialism, Marx insisted, is the "natural" outcome of historic development; its coming appeared to him inevitable by virtue of the "iron law of history". Then the class struggle which was (and is), as Marx said, the essence of the history of society, would be terminated; the antagonism between slaves and masters, exploited and exploiters, rich and poor, would disappear. For the first time in history, a classless society, a society of real equals and free men, would arise.

Karl Marx sketched his basic theory in his *Communist Manifesto*, written at the end of 1847; in it he predicted the imminent outbreak of middle-class revolutions. Indeed, only a few months later there were middle-class revolutions in France, Germany, Austria and Hungary. But the working-class revolutions which, as Marx expected, would have immediately to follow the middle-class revolutions failed to take place. A generation grew up after the Paris Commune in 1871 which saw neither wars nor revolutions

\* Benedetto Croce, *Historical Materialism and the Economics of Karl Marx*.

in Europe. Many Socialists wondered whether Marx's theory of revolutions still held true. Moreover, since the second half of the 'eighties until the first half-decade of the twentieth century Europe's economy prospered as never before. Many Socialists wondered whether Marx's theory of economic crisis was still valid.

It was Eduard Bernstein who raised the voice of doubts in Marxism. He had lived as a political refugee in England for many years until 1901. He had seen how British Labour slowly infiltrated social legislation, increased step by step the standard of living of the workers, gradually gained influence in State and society. British Socialism (with the exception of the small group of Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation) had never accepted Marxism; it carried on the traditions of the philosophical Radicals, Bentham and John Stuart Mill, and propagated the philosophy of gradualism. It did not believe in the possibility of the emergence of shattering crises and revolutions; it reckoned with a long period of an undisturbed equilibrium of the economic, social and international forces of the world; it expected from reforms a gradual transformation of society.

Eduard Bernstein, a most courageous, sincere and lovable man (as I found when I met him many years later), preached the British gospel to the German Socialists. He attacked the whole edifice of Marx's theories. He questioned its "scientific" character; to Bernstein, Marx's conception of Socialism was just as utopian as Saint Simon's and Robert Owen's. He applied Kant's thesis of the limitation of man's cognition in the perception of matter to the perception of social and historic affairs; the human mind is not able, he asserted, to foresee the development of society. He rejected Marx's doctrine of the inevitability of Socialism; Socialism might be, he said, a "desirable goal" for which man ought to strive, but its materialisation did not seem to be a certainty. "Only the movement matters, the aim does not", he once stated. He above all contested Marx's assumption that the Socialist society must necessarily emerge from crises, revolutions and wars. He visualised a peaceful course of events for a measurable time. He thought it possible for the Socialist movement to penetrate the whole social fabric of society, to "undermine" its capitalist foundations, and to transform it gradually into a Socialist State, without revolutions or any violent change.

From these theoretical deliberations he moved to most far-reaching tactical suggestions. He proposed close co-operation with the progressive sections of the middle classes in the democratisation of Imperial Germany. To gain their confidence, he

demanding the abandonment of the Marxist ideology of German Socialism and the entire revision of its programme (therefore Bernstein and his disciples were called Revisionists).

Eduard Bernstein was a devoted student of Marxism; but he perhaps thought about Marx what Aristotle thought of Plato: "Dear is Plato, but dearer still is truth." He, then, preached what he considered to be the truth, even should Marxism perish. His criticism of Marx was highly stimulating, and even fruitful. It forced every serious student of Socialism to reconsider the whole complex of Marx's ideas and to investigate its ideological sources once more. Through the years, from 1897, when Bernstein opened his attacks on Marxism,\* until the eve of the First World War, an intellectual battle on the highest level raged through the German Socialist movement. In scores of weighty books, in hundreds of essays, in debates at Congresses and Party meetings, Marxism was passionately re-discussed from every possible angle: from an economic, political, historical and philosophical point of view. Never before has the world witnessed an intellectual spectacle of such magnitude, acted by a political party.†

But though there was much truth in Bernstein's criticism, it was certainly not the "full truth"; indeed, it was fundamentally erroneous, as history has subsequently proved.

History had shown, first of all, that co-operation between the working class and the progressive section of the middle class was extremely difficult and, at that juncture of history at any rate, fruitless. Even in a country like France. There was a middle class with revolutionary traditions and genuine liberal aims; yet the first experiment of this kind failed. When the French Republic was endangered in the course of the *affaire Dreyfus* by a bloc of militarist-nationalist-clerical reactionaries, Jean Jaurès was prepared to support Waldeck-Rousseau's attempt to form a Government of the Left (in 1898). Millerand entered it as the Socialist representative. But Waldeck-Rousseau, anxious to please the Right, included in his Government General Gallifet, cursed by the workers for his massacre of the Communards. Clearly, the association in a Cabinet of a Socialist with an arch enemy of the Socialists was rather odious. Waldeck-

\* Eduard Bernstein worked out his criticism on Marx mainly in these two books which partly contain essays previously written: *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie*, 1899, and *Zur Geschichte und Theorie des Sozialismus*, 1901; see also his pamphlet *Wie ist wissenschaftlicher Sozialismus möglich?*

† This discussion deeply impressed the non-Socialist school of contemporary sociology also. See, for instance, Th. G. Masaryk, *Die wissenschaftliche und philosophische Krise des Sozialismus*.



Rousseau took, further, great pains to preserve and improve the Franco-Russian alliance; so he received in grand state the Czar himself, hated by the workers as the incarnation of cruel despotism. For this policy also the Socialists, being part of the Government, had to bear responsibility. At another time, in a conflict between employers and employees, Waldeck-Rousseau ordered his troops to fire on striking workers in Martinique and Chalon-sur-Saone. This, naturally, was more than the Socialists could stand. The discontent which that coalition Government aroused among the workers split the French Socialist Party from top to bottom (in 1901). The opponents of the tactics of co-operation, under the leadership of Guesde and Vaillant (himself a Communard), formed the *Parti Socialiste France*, while the Government Socialists, under the leadership of Jaurès, formed the *Parti Socialiste Français*.

When, then, even in the French Republic the experiment of co-operation between Socialists and middle-class parties failed, still less could its success be expected in the Hohenzollern military monarchy. Until 1890 the German Socialists were outlawed and treated as pariahs. Many Labour leaders had suffered imprisonment and banishment merely for being Socialists. Wilhelm II wanted to appease the workers, but under a very definite condition: the undiminished preservation of his autocracy. He was, perhaps, prepared to consent to some extension of social legislation; he was, however, definitely not prepared to let the smallest splinter break away from Bismarck's Constitution of the Reich, which secured the actual predominance of the Kaiser, the Junkers and the military caste.

There were also no middle-class parties of considerable weight in Germany which were willing to fight in earnest together with the working class for the democratisation of the State. Because the military caste in Germany, entrenched in the Prussian Diet, was so formidable, every combat for the democratisation of the Prussian Diet spelled the danger of violent clashes between the King's power and the people, clashes which would inevitably have generated the revolution. However, under the conditions prevailing in Germany at that time any political revolution would have assumed, of necessity, the character of a Socialist revolution. A triumphant revolution, springing from a political conflict, would have changed not only the political power relations between the classes, but also the property relations of society.

It is true that apart from the Socialists the Catholic Centre Party, together with the parties of the smaller minorities (Danes and Poles), as well as small progressive parties, stood against

Bismarck's system and aspired to a parliamentary democracy. (These parties together had gained a majority of votes in the general election of 1912.) Yet the non-Socialist parties feared the Socialist revolution more than they hated Prussian militarism.

If, then, assuming the Social Democratic Party had accepted Bernstein's advice and had most solemnly abjured its republican, anti-militarist and anti-nationalist tenet; assuming, further, that it had even renounced its Marxist creed and had abandoned Socialism as an immediate aim: it would have gained nothing whatever, except perhaps slight ameliorations of labour conditions. The essentials of power in the State, undiminished and unimpaired, would have remained with the Crown, the Junkers, the military caste, and the upper strata of the industrial, commercial and banking world.

In England the situation was very different. The predominance of the English Parliament was finally established in the Glorious Revolution of 1688; the King could, as George III did, corrupt the Parliament; but he could not rule against the will of the majority of the Parliament. With the abolition of the "rotten boroughs" and with the gradual extension of the franchise, the means of the domination of Parliament through corruption disappeared. Thus the British working class could hope to gain power in the State by constitutional means.

In Germany before the 1914 war the prospect of democratisation of the Reich, in particular of Prussia, by constitutional means appeared simply hopeless. I need not quote the testimony of the most distinguished Prussian historian, Professor Hans Delbrück, who freely admitted on the eve of the war of 1914 that the German officer corps would never tolerate the introduction of a parliamentary régime in Germany, save after a new Sedan—in which Germany was not the victor, but the vanquished.\* Every serious student of Imperial Germany knew that this was the case. Prince von Bülow even insisted (in his book *Imperial Germany*) that Prussia must never surrender her leadership in the German Empire, that Germany must remain an essentially military State, that responsible parliamentary government would be its ruin, and that a military State required a strong monarchy. In fact, far from any chance for democracy in Germany, the Emperor, his Court, and the military caste, frightened by the apparently irresistible Socialist advance, contemplated very seriously, after 1912, the abrogation of universal suffrage for the Reichstag. And there was no middle-class party in Germany which was in any way inclined to resist the impending *coup*

\* Hans Delbrück, *Regierung und Volkswille*, p. 136.

*d'état* with force. This was the imminent menace with which German Labour was confronted at this time, and the appeal to force to meet force was the only means left.

If, then, the Socialist movement would have gained nothing by the renunciation of its principles and tactics, it would have lost its most precious possession: its very idea.\*

The Socialist Party was the first movement in the history of the human race which aimed at no less bold a goal than the fundamental reconstruction of society. Early Christianity strove for the Kingdom of Heaven; Liberalism, for civil liberties; Socialism, however, for the common ownership of wealth as the precondition of universal liberty and eternal peace. Socialism fought not only against the excess of capitalist exploitation; it aimed at the total abolition of exploitation of men by men, through the organisation of production and distribution according to the need of men. It fought not only against the enlargement of army and navy; its anti-militarist tenet aimed at the total abolition of army and navy, through the organisation of the nations in a commonwealth of mankind. It fought for power in the State not to establish the domination of the working class, but to abolish the class structure of society. It fought not only for economic security of the workers, but also for the universal dignity of humanity.

Humanity is disgraced by the exploitation of men by men; by the poverty and ignorance of the many in an age of plenty and enlightenment; by the struggle of class against class; by wars of nation against nation. Humanity, above all, is disgraced by the predominance of the spirit of greed, by, in R. H. Tawney's expression, its all-pervading sense of acquisitiveness, and by the "fundamental principle of the Gradgrind philosophy", as Dickens (in his *Hard Times*) has elucidated it with unequalled brevity, "that everything has to be paid for"—that philosophy,

\* Professor Joseph Schumpeter, investigating the problem "why German Socialists clung so tenaciously to the Marxian creed", arrives at the following conclusions: "For a powerful party that could afford a distinctive creed yet was completely excluded not only from political responsibility but from any immediate prospect of it, it was natural to conserve the purity of the Marxian faith once it had been embraced. That purely negative attitude toward non-Socialist reform and all the doings of the bourgeois State . . . was really thrust upon it. The leaders were not irresponsible nor were they desperadoes. But they realised that in the given situation there was not much for the party to do except to criticise and to keep the banner flying. Any sacrifice of revolutionary principle would have been perfectly gratuitous. It would have only disorganised their following without giving to the proletariat much more than it got in any case. . . . Such small additional successes as might have been attained hardly warranted the party risk."—*Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, 1943, p. 345.

according to which "every inch of the existence of mankind, from birth to death, was to be a bargain across the counter, and if we did not get Heaven that way, it was not a politico-economic place, and we had no business there".

Socialism, at any rate its German school of thought, was deeply influenced by Kant's moral maxim (formulated once more in his *Eternal Peace*) that "Every man is to be respected as an absolute end in himself; and it is a crime against the dignity that belongs to him as human being, to use him as a mere means for some external purpose". From this maxim springs the vision of a society permeated by the sense of solidarity and brotherhood. This vision, the Socialists held, could be materialised only by a fundamental change in the social and economic structure of society, above all by a fundamental change in the prevailing system of property.

Marxism perceived that the social evils of every epoch of history—exploitation, poverty, ignorance, class struggle, crises, wars, and the universal disgrace of man resulting from all these evils—are inherent in the system of private ownership of the sources of wealth. Ameliorations of labour conditions, in the past as well as in the present, could of course extinguish neither poverty and exploitation nor crises, wars and self-humiliation of man. The standard of the American, British and German working classes, for instance, has greatly increased since the days when Bernstein recommended Revisionism; but the virulence—exploitation, crises and wars—immanent in capitalist society has lost nothing of its devastating vigour.

Had, then, the German Social Democratic Party abandoned its Marxian principles, as Eduard Bernstein suggested, it would have abandoned the essentials of Socialism; it would have ceased to be the warrior of the cause of man; it would have been reduced from a universal movement to a national "pressure group".\*

It could be contended—as Bernstein and the Revisionists actually did contend—that Socialism must not be conceived solely in the garb of Marxism. That is true; it is certainly not indispensable to master the complex of Marx's teachings in order to be a genuine Socialist, not merely in thought and sentiment, but also in deed and action. Keir Hardie might have known not a single line Marx has written, and yet, by disentangling British Labour from the Liberals and by forming an independent Labour Party, he acted as a Marxian Socialist, because he organised the working

\* It is interesting to note that Adolf Sturmthal asserts—on the contrary—that it was the defeat of the Revisionists from which "emerged the pressure-group mentality of European Labour".—*The Tragedy of European Labour 1918-1939*, 1944, p. 23.

class and forged the instrument primarily necessary for the struggle for Socialism. Marx's thought is surely not a creed; it is a compass with which to steer through the turbulent ocean of history. To abandon Marxism would be to throw away the intellectual instrument with which we discern the current of time.

The truth of this thesis was proved by the events subsequent to the debate on Bernstein's criticism of Marxism. Karl Marx asserted that the capitalist system is bound to collapse in the course of economic crises and social revolutions. Bernstein most emphatically rejected Marx's "theory of collapse"; he attempted to show that there are no limits to capitalist expansion and that economic crises are not inherent in the capitalist system as such; that, furthermore, the expansion of capitalism had mitigated class antagonism during the last decades, and not, as Marx has assumed, accentuated it; and that, therefore, no major crises in capitalist society could be expected in any measurable time.

Bernstein's theory was of supreme importance. For if it were true that the capitalist system could avoid major catastrophes and that no revolutionary situation must be expected for generations to come, then Bernstein's advice to abandon Marxism, and especially Marx's theory of revolutionary changes of society in the course of class struggles, would have been perfectly sound; if there were no prospect of crises and revolutions, then it would be ill-advised to prepare the working class for the coming of great social emergencies and to direct its policy on this assumption. Then it would indeed be reasonable for Labour to integrate into the capitalist system, to mitigate its social tensions, to accept the historic structure of the class society and of the class State, to collaborate with every class and every party (as expediency might demand) for the amelioration of labour conditions and for a gradual increase of Labour influence in the State. These were the tactics which Lassalle recommended in Prussia in the 'sixties and Sidney and Beatrice Webb in England in the 'nineties,\*

\* See Gustav Mayer, *Bismarck and Lassalle*, and Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *Industrial Democracy*. It is remarkable that more than half a century later the Communists, originally the most resolute opponents of the Reformist school of Socialism, have fully adopted its tenet. Characteristic of this change is the programmatic statement (on January 10, 1944) by the leader of the American Communist Party, Earl Browder, in which he pleaded for "a continuation of national unity into the post-war period for a long term of years", based upon "a compromise between classes", in order to maintain democracy. This policy, Browder said, "requires from Marxists . . . not to raise the issue of Socialism in such a form and manner as to endanger or weaken that national unity". He proclaimed the need of "making this capitalism work effectively in the post-war period", and he declared that the Communists are willing to "postpone all radical proposals for changing the social and economic system". *The Left News*, Feb. 1944. See also Harry Pollitt, *Answers to Questions*, 1945.

The crucial problem with which the contending wings of German Labour were confronted, then, was the valuation of the economic and political current of that time. Karl Kautsky, investigating (in 1901) the question "whether and to what extent the character of crises is changing, whether they display a tendency to disappear or to become milder" (as Bernstein assumed), came to the very opposite conclusion. He drew from his researches the inference that "crises are becoming ever more severe and extensive in scope"; he showed that the ever-recurrent economic depressions in the course of the trade cycle compelled every nation to strive for an increasing share of the world trade at the expense of others by means of colonial conquest and protective tariffs, thereby "steadily sharpening the antagonism among the great industrial States"; and he predicted with amazing acumen a series of disasters which, only twelve years later, were actually to befall humanity, when he said: "Crises, conflicts and catastrophes of all kinds, it is this lovely alliteration that the course of development places in prospect for the next decades. . . . The events of the coming years will lead to the disappearance of the dream that wars and catastrophes are a thing of the past while before us stretches ahead the level road of peaceful, quiet progress."\*

In fact, it was the increasing antagonism of the Great Powers which produced the disaster of the First World War; and it was the attempt to restore the capitalist system after that war which produced a series of most devastating economic crises from which Fascism and the Second World War emerged. For Fascism—whether in its German, Italian, Japanese or Spanish garb—is fundamentally the most accentuated expression of the nationalistic and imperialistic tendencies immanent in the capitalist system.

Certainly, the causes of the First and the Second World Wars, and the twenty years' crises between them, were infinitely more complex than such a very brief statement would indicate. We remember well that the First World War was kindled by the Hapsburg Government in order to counteract the national disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy; we know, also, that the Austrian-Russian tension, caused by the rivalries of these two great Powers in the Balkans, would never have exploded in a world war had France not suffered Sedan (for which she was seeking revenge in an alliance with Russia); we know, further, that German-British colonial as well as maritime rivalries were an additional element fomenting the high international tension which was to burst in war. And to all these

\* Karl Kautsky, *Krisentheorien*, *Die Neue Zeit*, Jhrg. XX, Bd. 2, 1901-2, pp. 133.  
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manifold causes have to be added the imponderables of the men at the helm of world affairs.\*

Yet, difficult as it might appear to be to reduce the whole complex of causes, which produced the major crisis of the First World War (and the subsequent crises), to a common denominator, no serious student of social affairs would be likely to contest the palpable fact that the economic and political "system" which governed Europe was the cardinal engineer of that catastrophe. This system produced the economic and imperialist antagonism between the States; it generated armament races, naval races, colonial races; it bred nationalism and national hatred; it begot an atmosphere of international hysteria of such a degree that a pistol shot in the small Bosnian town of Sarajevo could precipitate the avalanche of a war in which eleven million people were to die; a series of economic crises which lasted for twenty years; and another world war, in which uncountable millions in Europe and Asia were to perish.

Karl Kautsky, in his criticism of Bernstein's hypothesis, was of course not able, in 1901, to predict the forms in which the crises to come would materialise; but he deduced from the tendencies, working as an integral force of the system, that crises were bound to occur, in one way or another.

The German Socialists took the controversy Bernstein *versus* Marx very seriously. For if Bernstein were right in his contention that there was no prospect of fundamental changes in the power relations of the classes, and that capitalism, on the other hand, tended to diminish the scope of economic crises and to alleviate the acuteness of class antagonism, the ideology, phraseology, programme and tactics of the movement would have to be entirely changed.

This question was the main item on the agenda of the annual conferences of the Party at Hanover (in 1899) and at Dresden (in 1903). August Bebel, convinced of the erroneous assumption on which Bernstein based his thesis, carried the day. Two years later the Congress of the Socialist International at Amsterdam examined the whole controversy, which had become an inter-

\* The English historian Viscount Bryce pointed during the last Great War to the phenomenon that the decision which involved the whole of the human race in a major disaster had been taken merely by a few scores of people: "How few are the persons in every State in whose hands lie the issues of war and peace! In some of the now belligerent countries the final and vital decisions were taken by four or five persons only, in others by six or seven only. Even in Britain decision rested practically with less than twenty-five. . . ."—*Some Historical Reflexions on War, Past and Present*, 1916, p. 8. The fate of civilisation and the lives of millions were dependent to some extent on the degree of wisdom, the mood of temper and the prejudices and suspicions of those few.

national issue owing to the split in French Socialism. It decided against Reformism and "Millerandism", defended by Jaurès. Jaurès, faithful to the principle of Socialist internationalism, yielded to the decision of the Congress. A year later the two contending Socialist Parties merged into the United Socialist Party of France.

This was a great triumph for Marxism; it was, also, a brilliant test of the cohesion of the Socialist International.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### AMONG GERMAN SOCIALISTS

"The German Social Democratic Party was the very ideal of all the Socialist Parties of the International. . . . It brought to life what others visualised as an idea. This magnificent movement, consciously striving for the realisation of its historic mission to the world, undeflectible, irresistible and unconquerable in its progress, concentrated all its strength and thought on a single aim: the emancipation of the working class."—Friedrich Adler, *Die Erneuerung der Internationale*, 1915.

WHEN I went to Berlin (in September 1912), the contest between the reformist and revolutionary schools of Socialist thought had by no means abated. I had followed it with the greatest attention, and still greater passion, from the moment that I joined the movement. Needless to say, I (like nearly all young Socialists) sided with the "Revolutionaries" against the Reformists; this was even the prevailing mood of thought in Austrian Socialism. Whenever the reformist contentions were discussed, Victor Adler's ceaseless warning was quoted, to beware of the danger of "shallow self-complacency and cynicism" which the routine work of the Party might produce.

"The inclination to make the Social Democratic Party a Party just as any other," Adler said, "springs surely as much from honest and even ideal motives as the revolutionary urge of the masses. We 'Revolutionaries' also think that even the smallest improvement in the conditions of life of the workers is worthy of the utmost efforts." But, Adler insisted, Reformism carried in itself the mortal danger that Socialists might easily lose sight of Socialism, the very aim to which their work ought to be consecrated; it might debase the innermost life of the movement by a spirit of self-contentment, and thus corrupt its intellectual and moral roots. "We have to keep in our mind," Victor Adler said, "that



all our wearisome work from day to day for the present derives its sanctity and dignity solely from its meaning in regard to the achievement of our final goal.”\*

I arrived in Berlin just in time to see a most impressive display of the power of German Social Democracy. It was the climax of the electioneering campaign in the by-election of a Berlin representative of the Reichstag—the representative of the only constituency out of the six in the German capital which had not returned a Socialist at the general election in January 1912.

It was on a Sunday morning when the concluding meeting of the Berlin Socialists took place on the Hasenheide, a large plain on the outskirts of the city. The biggest assembly of people I ever saw was the procession of the Viennese workers in November 1905; there, however, the masses moved in columns, so that I could observe only parts of them. On the Hasenheide, where, in a wide circle, platforms for the speakers had been erected, the columns of people, marching from all directions, melted together into the vast assembly. Next day the papers reported that there had been 300,000 men and women. Slogans against militarism, imperialism and Prussian autocracy were inscribed on the many huge banners which the workers carried, and dominated the speeches. The by-election was a triumph; now the whole of Berlin was red.

After I had settled down in a small bedroom near the Alexander Platz, I sent Otto Bauer's letter of introduction to Rudolf Hilferding. By return I received a postcard from him, asking me to call for him at the editorial office of the *Vorwärts* in the Lindenstrasse and to have dinner with him.

Rudolf Hilferding, a Viennese doctor, was one of the brilliant brains which composed the small group of the so-called Austrian Marxists (Otto Bauer, Karl Renner and Max Adler were its other members). In the series of publications of the *Marx Studien*, in which Otto Bauer's *Nationalitätenfrage* also appeared, Hilferding had published (in 1904) a discussion of Böhm-Bawerk's theory of marginal utility. In the bulky volume, *Das Finanzkapital* (in 1910), he analysed the development of the capitalist structure during the half-century since Karl Marx had finished his *Capital*. Hilferding's *Finanzkapital* was, indeed, the continuation of Marx's chief work and was, for its style, erudition and method, regarded as its fourth volume. Now only in his thirties, he was already the leader-writer of the chief daily of the German Social Democratic Party.

Hilferding received me with warm cordiality, and told me at

\* Victor Adler discussed the problems of Revisionism in a number of essays, reprinted in the collection of his *Aufsätze, Reden und Briefe*, 1929, vol. VI.

once that I was expected for tea by "the Kautskys" the next Sunday afternoon. I was shy enough meeting Hilferding; my embarrassment increased with Kautsky's invitation.

Karl Kautsky's renown was then unsurpassed in the world of Socialist thought. It is difficult to realise now the tremendous weight Karl Kautsky's words carried in international Socialism before the First World War. He was respected as the custodian of Marx's tradition and as the infallible interpreter of his thought. He had known Karl Marx, and he was a great friend of Friedrich Engels. He had published Marx's posthumous writings (*Theorien über den Mehrwert*, 4 vols.), in addition to a standard work interpreting Marx's economic theories, and a whole library of historical and sociological books and essays in Marx's spirit. He was a mighty fighter, tenacious, inflexible, almost unforgiving. It was mainly due to his powerful dialectics that Reformism was defeated, and there was no person in the German movement whose advice Bebel valued more highly than his. Whenever Bebel was present in Berlin he would spend Sunday afternoon with "the Kautskys". For his orthodoxy and dogmatism Kautsky was scorned by his adversaries as the "Socialist Pope"; but his disciples willingly accepted what was meant to be a term of contempt and venerated him in fact as a Pope.

Now, to be asked to tea by the "Pope" himself is reason enough for anyone to be embarrassed. But I was pleasantly surprised when I knocked at the door of his flat in Charlottenburg, Wilmersdorferstrasse 42, and a very kind grandpapa, small and delicate of stature, with snow-white hair and beard, opened and welcomed me with the most artless charm and amiability. Under the warmth of his gay blue eyes behind sparkling spectacles my embarrassment melted away in no time. Through a tiny corridor he showed me the way to his study, which served as the editorial office of *Die Neue Zeit*. It was crammed with bookshelves, which covered not only the four walls, but also cut right across the room. There he introduced me to his collaborator, Gustav Eckstein, brother of Therese Schlesinger, one of the great women of the Austrian Socialist movement. Eckstein, a tall, frail-looking man in his late thirties, had distinguished himself as a sociologist by a fine study on matriarchy in early Japanese history (applying Bachofen's theory on matriarchy to the Japanese example). Together with Eckstein we went into the living-room, and were received there by Luise Kautsky; in her gracious, delightful and almost maternal company I felt at home at once. She was forty-eight, ten years younger than her husband, with energetic, regular, broad and handsome features, a lively intelligence and an extraordinary flair for conversation. Rudolf Hilferding was

already there, having had his usual Sunday lunch with Kautsky. Luise, like Hilferding and Eckstein, was a Viennese. "Papyrus" (as the grand old man was nicknamed by his sons and his intimate friends) was also an Austrian, though a native of Prague; he had, however, lived a good deal in Vienna. So the talk turned first to Austrian affairs and to Kautsky's Viennese friends, Victor Adler and Otto Bauer. When Kautsky spoke of Otto Bauer, there was a ring of tenderness in his voice; he seemed to esteem him highly, and was apparently very fond of him, though he did not share, as he told me, Bauer's theory of nationality.

However strong was Kautsky's interest in the Austrian Labour movement (of which he knew the most minute details), he was even more absorbed by the theoretical and tactical conflicts within the German Labour movement. So our talk soon turned to German affairs.

Kautsky had won his battle against the Revisionists. But meanwhile a formidable group of adversaries arose from the Left in the brilliant figures of Rosa Luxemburg, Clara Zetkin, Franz Mehring, Karl Liebknecht, Parvus and Julian Karcki.

The Russian Revolution had revealed the powerful revolutionary dynamics of political mass strikes. Even before the Russian Revolution, the Belgian workers enforced through political mass strikes (in 1891 and 1893) an extension of the franchise. But as a revolutionary weapon the political strike was used with great success for the first time by the Russian workers in 1905.

Rosa Luxemburg had played a leading rôle in the Polish Social Democratic Party during the Russian Revolution (it should be remembered that the main parts of Poland of to-day then formed a Russian province); she was deeply impressed by the effectiveness of political mass strikes. She had seen how these strikes spread spontaneously from factory to factory, from one industrial centre to the next, and how they paralysed Czarism and forced it into capitulation. Returning to Germany from Russia (where she had been imprisoned for a time), she recommended in a passionate pamphlet\* the use of this weapon in the struggle for the democratisation of Prussia and the Reich, a struggle which, if waged with the revolutionary means of strikes, would develop into an armed insurrection and precipitate the final revolutionary struggle of the workers for the power of the State.

The ceaseless struggle of the Prussian Socialists for universal and equal franchise to the Prussian Diet had, indeed, generated among the German workers a tense militant mood. In February

\* Rosa Luxemburg, *Der Massenstreik, die Partei und die Gewerkschaften* (1906).

and March 1910, Sunday after Sunday, great masses of workers demonstrated in the streets of all towns in defiance of the Government. The Berlin Police President, Traugott von Jagow, issued orders, posted on the walls of the buildings, in which he declared that "the streets are for traffic only", adding the warning that firearms might be used; "I warn curious onlookers", he proclaimed. Troops were concentrated in the capital of the Reich and marched through its streets attempting to intimidate the population. But the workers remained firm, and in spite of bloody clashes between workers and police in some provincial towns, and in spite of all the threats by the Government, the demonstrations continued with growing intensity. There was a most exciting contest between the police forces and the workers in the streets. When von Jagow expected that the forthcoming demonstration would take place the next Sunday in Berlin West, tens of thousands of Socialists, outwitting the police, made a surprise move by bursting into the streets of Berlin East; when von Jagow massed his forces on the subsequent Sunday in Berlin North, in anticipation of a demonstration, it would turn up in the very centre of the city; and before the headquarters of the Government could direct their forces against the workers—police cars were not yet in use—they had already done their work and dispersed. So it went on for weeks and weeks, much to the amusement of Europe at the impotence of the proud Prussian police. From Sunday to Sunday the international prestige of the German Socialists grew. Their headquarters seemed to muster the vast masses of workers into a miraculous force. And von Jagow became an international laughing-stock. So he had to give up the fight.

Yet, though the German Socialists had humiliated the Police President, they had not defeated the ruling caste; though they had won the right to assemble in the streets of the towns, they had not conquered the Prussian Diet, which was the very fortress of the Junkers' domination. Rosa Luxemburg urged upon the Social Democrats the need of increasing the weight of attack by the application of political mass strikes.

Karl Kautsky agreed with Rosa Luxemburg that the general strike was a revolutionary weapon. He drew, however, from this valuation the conclusion that, because it was such a formidable instrument, it was applicable only in a revolutionary situation. He foresaw the emergence of such a situation;\* but he did not think it possible to force the pace of this development. Kautsky did not reject the political strike as a suitable weapon of the working class; but he advised its use only as the last means, either in defence against a *coup d'état*, which the military caste was

\* Karl Kautsky, *Der Kampf um die Macht* (1909), p. 112.

openly contemplating, or in an attack should the Hohenzollern régime become involved in a crisis.

This controversy between Kautsky and Luxemburg stirred the German movement to its depths. The trade-union leaders rejected the political mass strike on principle; the majority of the party accepted it only as a means of defence against an attack on the rights of the workers. All of them rejected the political mass strike as an instrument, as Rosa Luxemburg had recommended, in the day-to-day fight for franchise and against militarism and imperialism.

I myself was very much in sympathy with Rosa Luxemburg's attitude. I could, indeed, not understand why the German Socialists should not proceed from the defensive to the offensive and precipitate the social revolution in Germany, thus forestalling the war, the outbreak of which Kautsky and Bauer had so convincingly predicted as inevitable. I remembered also the deep impression I received from a lecture which the Belgian Socialist, Henry de Man, delivered on this problem in my youth group when I was still its chairman.

Henry de Man was then Secretary of the Socialist Youth International, and a stout partisan of the small group of "Anti-Militarists" within the International, of whom Karl Liebknecht, in Germany, and Gustav Hervé, in France, were the most prominent.

In his lecture Henry de Man scorned the endeavour of the Austrian and German Socialists towards democratisation of the State. "While the workers might get a slight extension of the franchise, and perhaps even some share of responsibility, the growing power of militarism will sooner plunge the world into war," he said.

"There is no use to strive for trifles," he stated. "We have to attack the very core of power. And that is the army. Don't deceive yourself," he implored his youthful audience, "into believing that universal franchise would be able to dislodge militarism. It can be overthrown by revolutionary means only."

Henry de Man propagated not only resistance to military conscription by means of mass disobedience to the recruiting orders, but also the political general strike on an international scale as a means of breaking the power of international militarism.\*

\* Of the three leading anti-militarist internationalists before the last war, the Belgian Socialist, de Man, and the French Socialist, Hervé, turned passionate nationalists in 1914. Hervé, emphasising the change of opinion which he underwent at the beginning of the war, changed the name of his paper, *La guerre sociale*, which had served his anti-militarist propaganda hitherto, and named it now *La Victoire*. Only the German Socialist, Karl Liebknecht, remained faithful to the principles of international Socialism and anti-militarism and attempted to make true during the war what he had advocated before the war. Henry de Man later embraced Fascism.

His talk came to my mind when I listened to Karl Kautsky, reflecting on the latest Socialist success in the by-election a week before.

"You see," he said, "we have confirmed our victory of January; and in the next general election we may gain such a dominating position in the Reichstag that the régime will be compelled to launch an open attack against us, breaking the law and the constitution, and ruling with naked force. Then," he added pensively, "we shall have to answer this challenge with a general strike, because then we shall be confronted with a revolutionary situation."

"But was there not a revolutionary situation two years ago, when there were the tremendous street demonstrations, and did we not miss it then?" I asked.

"Certainly not," Hilferding answered. "It is only Rosa's illusion that you can break up the powerful fabric of Prussian militarism by political strikes. With an attempt to disrupt the organisation of State and society, we would then have given the reaction the pretext for the *coup d'état*. And we would have been crushed under the formidable weight of the armed forces."

I related my impressions of the powerful demonstration of the Berlin workers I had recently seen and asked: "Would it really be possible to crush such a well-organised group as the German working class?"

"It is one thing, you must remember," Hilferding replied, "to go into the street in a political demonstration as a peaceful citizen, and it is another thing to stand the tribulations of a revolution. For don't forget," he added, "that political mass strikes must, of necessity, develop into armed insurrection."

"Then you will have the revolutionary situation for which we are looking," I remarked; "and it will be we who choose the most favourable moment for it."

"I don't know which moment is the most favourable for a revolutionary attack. At any rate, I'm against preventive wars and preventive revolutions," Kautsky said dryly.

"You cannot have a general strike," interposed Eckstein, who had silently followed the discussion with a grave expression on his face, "without the willing consent of the trade unions. Yet the trade unions are definitely against anything like political strikes; they don't want to stake the vast organisations they have built up in a hazardous enterprise."

"But will they consent willingly when a genuine revolutionary situation does emerge?" I wanted to know.

"Not quite willingly," Hilferding answered, laughing, "not quite willingly. But they will have to, because then they will not

be asked by the infuriated workers. The workers would then strike without anybody's consent.

"You will get to know the German workers," he said, addressing me. "They are the most law-abiding citizens so long as the law stands and so long as they see what they can do under the law. But should the Government dare to break the law, the workers will get into a frenzy which knows no bounds."

Unfortunately there was not much time left for me to get into close touch with the Berlin workers. The few I learned to know in daily intercourse at the publishing firm at which I was engaged appeared to be of the same type as my Viennese shop-colleagues, though a little more respectable, and by no means in a revolutionary mood. I had almost the same impression from the Socialist comrades whom I met on Saturday evenings at the usual *Zahl-  
abende*, in a small tavern near the Alexanderplatz. There, however, I learned that in these weekly meetings in innumerable taverns all over the Reich rested the miraculous power of the Socialist organisation, as displayed in the surprising street demonstrations two years earlier. At these meetings on Saturday evenings the active Socialists were secretly informed where the demonstration was to take place next morning. During the same night they informed their comrades in their districts by word of mouth, and although tens of thousands of workers were set in motion, there was never a leakage of the secret. The police were taken by surprise every time; they never succeeded in piercing the secrecy of the Saturday meetings. Many of the tavern-keepers were faithful Socialists, former workers (as, for instance, Fritz Ebert, later the first President of the Republic), who had been victimised and had with the help of the Party opened a tavern to earn a living; and everyone who attended the meeting was known to at least one or two of them.

Hardly had I begun to become a little familiar with the small group of Berlin Socialists I used to see at these meetings, when I received a letter from Otto Bauer offering me a job as a sub-editor of the *Volksstimme*, a Socialist paper in Warnsdorf, on the Saxon frontier. Though I would have preferred to stay a little longer in Berlin, Hilferding advised me to start practical work for the movement. "In a month in an editorial office, even in Warnsdorf, you will learn more than you could learn outside the Party machine in Berlin in a year," he said. "Besides," he added, "in Warnsdorf you are almost within the German Labour movement." And he gave me a letter of introduction to Hans Block, editor of the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*. So I went to Warnsdorf in the second half of December, 1912, to start my career as a Socialist journalist.

## CHAPTER NINE

### GATHERING CLOUDS

"There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian. . . ."—Col. iii. 11.

WARNSDORF, WHERE I was to live for almost two years, was a very small town at the northern border of Bohemia. It was a half-hour's walk over the meadows and hills to German soil. The paper on which I worked was edited at Warnsdorf, but printed in a hamlet of Saxony. It was only half an hour on my bicycle to Görlitz (a bigger Saxon town), and less than three hours to Dresden; by rail it was only two hours to Leipzig. So in Warnsdorf I was almost as much in Germany as I was in Austria.

Of the 25,000 people who lived in the town, about 20,000 derived their livelihood from the textile industry. In almost every one of the humble cottages which were scattered round the centre of the town there were a couple of weaver's looms, tended by children and old people while the adults went to the mills.

The Warnsdorfers were the most lovable people I had ever lived among. They were very poor; a salary of 20 or 24 Kronen (about 17s. to 20s.) for a sixty-hours' week was regarded as a high one, and I was rather ashamed at getting as high a wage as 34 Kronen (about £1 11s.). Actually it was a third less than I would have earned as a gilder in Berlin. But in spite of their poverty, the huts in which the weavers lived were of the utmost tidiness. Their children were kept clean and well, although traces of malnutrition and the effect of work at the loom at an early age were already visible in their pale faces, thin bodies and rickety legs.

Their ancestors had lived in Warnsdorf for many centuries, and had handed down the art of weaving from generation to generation; they had also bequeathed something of the spirit of mysticism and religious sectarianism which was widespread among the weavers of Northern Bohemia and Southern Saxony in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Now, at the close of the nineteenth century, they had embraced Socialism, preached by Schiller Sepp, a countryman of theirs, poet, writer and an enthusiastic propagandist. He emerged from the weaver proletariat; he died prematurely of consumption, like most of the weavers.



To these people Socialism was almost a religious faith, and when I, as I often did, addressed a small gathering of weavers in one of their huts, they listened with an expression of serenity on their haggard, wrinkled faces, as if they were listening to a sermon in a secret congregation of persecuted Anabaptists.

Poor though they were, they built a stately Labour Club House with their pennies. It contained a meeting-hall for 200 or 300 persons, a gymnasium and a modest library. The Warnsdorfers also insisted on having a paper of their own. It appeared only twice a week; its circulation never exceeded 5000 copies, and the whole editorial staff consisted of a single man, Franz Augsten.

Now, after he had been working for many years alone, I was engaged to help him. Franz Augsten, a faithful disciple of Schiller Sepp, also came from the mill, and had the same earnestness and uprightness as most of the weavers of the place. He was a tall, broad-shouldered, handsome man in his late forties, with blue eyes and fair, bushy hair; he was good-natured, well read, and had a deep-rooted awe for anything connected with letters and science. He himself was without any literary or even journalistic ambitions. He used to write, in an artless, clean style, summaries of the news and reports on local affairs; for the discussion of "great policy" in leading articles and features he collected the best essays from the *Arbeiter Zeitung* and German papers and, without bothering much about the copyright, put them into our paper. "I couldn't do the articles better, could I?" he would say; "and what is truth for the workers in Vienna and Berlin is clearly truth for the workers of Warnsdorf. Don't you think so?"

Though I had to admit that he was perfectly right, my burning desire to become a writer and my longing to say what filled my heart could not resist the temptation offered to me here. Twice a week there were twelve to sixteen pages of a full-sized paper to fill. Eagerly I seized the opportunity, and did my utmost to cover as many columns as possible with my own writings. I was still a very inexperienced journalist, and had not learned the art of restraint in language or in the selection of subjects on which I chose to reflect. There was no world affair, big or small, and no literary or philosophical theme, however intricate, on which I would have hesitated to comment, much to the amused astonishment of dear old Augsten. But he did not mind, and let me have my way in enlightening the weavers of Warnsdorf. So they had to be satisfied with learning, for example, how Ludwig Feuerbach had conceived the image of Christ and on which point of thought Marx had parted from Hegel. They also learned that Richard Wagner's *Ring* was but a symbolic reflection of our class struggle

against capitalism, and that Friedrich Schiller was, in fact, a predecessor of Ferdinand Lassalle.

With regard to home policy, I took particular care to carry on my quarrel with the Hapsburg authority; no institution of the Hapsburgs, however sacred, was safe from my indignant attacks. Of course, every issue of the paper in which the attack appeared was promptly confiscated by the authorities. But no matter. I made a special point of acquiring for our paper the reputation of being the most frequently confiscated in the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy; and I succeeded nobly. However, I did not play quite fair at this game. Since our paper was printed, and distributed among subscribers, in a foreign country (in Germany), and as we had no street sale, the police were unable to lay hands on it. So the confiscations did no harm, except to make the governor of our district (*Bezirkshauptmann*) extremely nervous. I flattered myself that I was regarded by him as His Majesty's enemy No. 1 in the dominion of Warnsdorf when he twice tried me in court for offences against His Majesty; but both times I was acquitted by the jury.

The most serious of all problems with which the Party and, indeed, the Austrian Monarchy was then confronted was how to make the ten nations of the Hapsburg realm live together peaceably. When the House of Hapsburg, in the course of centuries, acquired, partly by dynastic marriages and partly by conquest, an Empire stretching from the Saxon frontier to the Po, from Switzerland to Volhynia and Roumania, the people living on the soil like the soil itself became the property of the rulers. Until the French Revolution, the Hapsburgs appeared hardly aware that the people whom they had inherited and conquered, and over whom they ruled, were different nations with different languages and different cultural traditions. They slew the Czech nobility in the battle of the White Mountain, in 1620, and believed they had thus finished the Czech nation; they put the men of the Italian Risorgimento in chains in the dungeon of the Spielberg in Brünn, and believed that they had thus solved the Italian problem; they hanged thirteen Hungarian generals; and with Croatian levies, helped by Czarist Cossacks, crushed Kossuth's national army before Temeswar in 1849. They believed that they had pacified their Empire.

But eager as the Hapsburgs were in beheading, strangling and imprisoning as many nationalist Czechs, Italians and Hungarians as possible, the Czech, Italian and Hungarian nations survived. Whereas the idea of national emancipation in its first stage was an issue of the aristocracy, later, with the spread of industrialisation and civilisation and the rise of the middle classes, it became

an issue of the common people: first of the historic nations—the Italians, Hungarians, Poles and Czechs—and later of the “forgotten nations”—Ukrainians, Slovaks, Croats and Roumanians.

There were (including the Germans) eleven nations over whom the Hapsburgs ruled; but none of them, not even the Germans, felt quite at home in the Hapsburg Empire; to them the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy was not a common house to live in freely, but rather a common prison in which they were kept by force.

It would, however, be incorrect to say that the Hapsburgs (with the exception of Joseph II, who reigned from 1780 till 1790) had the idea of Germanising their Empire. The simple truth seems to be that never had an idea of any sort entered the brain of any of the Hapsburgs (again with the exception of Joseph II, who was, it is assumed, therefore poisoned by the Jesuits, and perhaps, though to a far less degree, of Archduke Rudolf, who presumably committed suicide in 1890). It is amazing to observe that (with the exceptions already alluded to and Charles V) hardly any of the many hundreds of members of this family in its Austrian and Spanish branches, the genealogy of which can be traced back to the thirteenth century, have attained distinction as a statesman, an artist, a scholar, or even as an outstanding personality. They were at their best mediocrities, some of them noteworthy for the magnitude of their wickedness, cruelty, greediness and perfidy, some of them for their cunning and mendacity, but none of them for generosity or greatness of mind. They were guided through all the centuries by the sole wish to hold what they had and, if possible, to enlarge it, preferably by marriage. However, as the centuries passed, they lost faith even in their own survival. Ferdinand I (who ascended the throne in 1835) used to say: “At any rate, for my lifetime and Metternich’s it [the Empire] will last”; and like Louis XV he would add: “*Après nous le déluge.*” Ferdinand I, who abdicated in favour of his nephew, Francis Joseph, in 1848, was a little too pessimistic; it took another seventy years for his forebodings to come true and for the Hapsburgs, together with their Empire, to disappear from the stage of history.

It was the unsolved problems of nationality which brought about the Hapsburgs’ downfall.

The many countries, with their multitude of nations, which the Hapsburgs had acquired had been forged together by the common menace with which all of them were threatened: the Moham-medan drive into Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This menace had to be repelled in many wars

lasting almost 200 years. The individual countries were not able to defend themselves single-handed against the formidable power of the Sultans. They needed unification into a forceful entity. (For example, the Croatian Diet—*domini Croatie*—threatened by a Turkish invasion, proposed in 1524 that Archduke Ferdinand should assume the domination over their country in order to secure the help of Austria and, through Austria, of the German Empire.\*) The Turks had conquered the Balkans and Hungary; twice they had besieged Vienna (in 1529 and 1683). Had they captured Vienna, Central Europe would perhaps have been turned Mohammedan. It was Austria's historic function in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to defend the Cross against the Crescent, the European civilisation against the Moslem.

Out of the common destiny of these countries and nations grew also, in the course of centuries, a common economy, interlacing the cattle-breeding Alps of the western provinces and the wheat-growing plains of the eastern provinces with the industrial districts of Lower Austria, Styria and Bohemia.

Had it been possible to reconcile the just claims of the disinherited nations to autonomy and freedom and to integrate them in a democratic commonwealth, the Austro-Hungarian State would have survived as an economically sound and culturally attractive community. For some of the nations which composed that State—as, for instance, the Czech, Hungarian, Slovakian, Slovenian—were too small to form independent States (and economic entities) in our age of modern industry, which requires big spaces and big markets; other nations which had compatriots beyond the Austrian frontiers—for example, the Germans, Poles, Italians and Ukrainians—knew that the price of attaining national unity would have to be paid with the immeasurable misery of a war. Therefore no responsible politician proposed the breaking up of the Dual State. Palacky, the great Czech statesman and historian, even held, in the 'fifties, that, as far as the Czechs were concerned, "if there were no Austria in existence, she would have to be created".

Yet the ruling aristocracy, Hapsburg as well as Hungarian and Polish, and the German *bourgeoisie*, which had acquired a share in the domination of the Empire, were unable to read the signs of the times. The reconstruction of the Empire was only possible on democratic lines. Then something like a new Switzerland on a great scale would perhaps have evolved, a multi-national commonwealth, generating in the congeries of its

\* Herman Ignaz Bidermann, *Geschichte der Oesterreichischen Gesamtstaatsidee, 1526-1804*, 1884, vol. II, pp. 198 ff.

nations a common feeling of affinity and an allegiance to the common State—that is, a common national sentiment superseding the sentiment of the individual nations which composed the State.

The institution of democracy would, however, have deprived the ruling classes of the sources of their privileges and power and perhaps also some of their wealth; they therefore resisted a fundamental transformation of the Empire. They failed thus in the task of reconciliation of the Austro-Hungarian nations. "Austria-Hungary remained a State which could never evolve a nation from its discrepant mass of material."\* It appeared, then, to the disinherited nations that there was no hope of infusing new life into the petrified structure of that country. They lost faith in it.

Only the Social Democrats of all the Austrian nations, and above all the German Socialists, earnestly endeavoured to rebuild the State as a condition of its survival. Their attitude was certainly not motivated by any particular sympathy with the Hapsburgs. So long as Central Europe was in a state of revolutionary fermentation, and the unification of all the German tribes in a common State had not yet attained its final shape, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, hoped that the revolution would overthrow the Hohenzollerns, break up the Hapsburg Empire and create the German Republic, including in it the Austrian Germans. They assumed that in this revolutionary process, spreading over that region of Europe, the independence of Poland would be restored, and all the Italians would be united in a single national State.

The revolution, however, failed in 1849. Austria was expelled by Prussia from the German Confederation (in 1866) and the German States were united in the Reich (in 1871) under the Hohenzollern supremacy; the ten millions of Austrian Germans remained in the Hapsburg Dual Monarchy.

From this time the unification of the Austrian Germans with those of the Reich could be expected only from another revolution or a European war. Victor Adler did not relinquish hope of a revival of the revolution. But as time passed, and the prospect of a revolution seemed to have disappeared from the European horizon and the balance of power to have become stabilised, Victor Adler faced the fact. As the multitude of nations had to live together in one State, he considered it the duty of all responsible men to make the State a home of the nations.

"The Social Democrats are not fond of this strange structure," he said; "yet the Social Democrats cannot remain indifferent as

\* Ernest Barker, *National Character and the Factors in its Formation*, 1927, p. 123.

to whether Austria perishes or not. For we are faced not with her end in horror, but with a horror without end. We are faced with her sickness, which might last immeasurably long. Under this disease the working classes suffer most of all."

He refuted the theory of doing nothing but wait, since Austria was doomed anyhow. "We cannot direct our policy in the expectation of an earthquake," he said, and added: "Besides, such a catastrophe is beyond any likelihood, and as far as one can foresee the development, such a catastrophe is not in sight."\*

Victor Adler succeeded in uniting the Socialist parties of the Austrian nations into a federation. The Socialists of every nation in Austria had a political organisation of their own, but they had a common executive, elected by a joint biannual conference of all these parties. Similarly the Socialist members of Parliament of all the nations formed a single parliamentary group (equivalent to the British Parliamentary Labour Party). Thus there was in Austria a Socialist International, based on the principles of a common programme, autonomy of organisations, and agreement on tactics.

Austria was seething with national strife. The Czechs were no longer willing to tolerate the German predominance; the Croats revolted against the predominance of the Hungarian aristocracy; the Italian *irredenta* increased the vigour of their resolve to break away from Austria; the Magyars revolted against the supremacy of the Austrians; the Ukrainians suffered under the dominance of the Polish aristocracy. The public life of the Hapsburg Monarchy was poisoned and paralysed by this war of all against all.

To the Austrian Socialists it was clear that the State could survive only by instituting equality of rights of every nation. They proposed (in 1899) a programme of national reconstruction of the State, aiming at the transformation of the centralised administration into a democratic federal commonwealth, based on the autonomy of each nation. Austria should, according to this programme, be divided into national homogeneous, self-ruling cantons with their own national administration and a (limited) legislative, leaving to a federal parliament and a federal government the administration of State affairs. "Austria must first die in order to live," Adler said; "she must be divided into her national elements, which might then be integrated, if possible, into a new entity. The old feudalism must go; and absolutism must be broken, for the integration of the nationally autonomous elements of Austria is only possible on the basis of an honest, thorough democracy."

\* Victor Adler, *Aufsätze, Reden und Briefe*, 1929, vol. VIII, pp. 135, 253.

Adler uttered a prophetic warning which was to become true in less than a decade and a half. "Austria," he said, "needs such a fundamental change in order to survive. Otherwise she will die. But hers will not be an heroic death. She will perish ingloriously on the dung heap of world history."\*

In none of the Austrian provinces was the fight between the nations as bitter as in Bohemia, where I then lived.

The Socialists, indeed, regarded it as their most important task to oppose nationalism in any garb. They were fully aware that nationalism was the means used by the German and Czech *bourgeoisie* to reassert their spiritual domination over the working classes.

In Bohemia the German nationalist movement was a movement of the manufacturers, sweating the German workers just as ruthlessly as they sweated the Czech workers, and of the upper-class school teachers, factory managers, civil servants, technicians, clerks and shop-assistants, looking down on the German workers as contemptuously as they looked down on the Czech "rabble". The class issue in this national struggle became all the clearer since the manufacturers of Bohemia attempted to organise the German workers into national trade unions as opposed to the international Socialist trade unions. Bohemia was, in fact, the cradle of the Nazi movement.

The weavers of Warnsdorf were Germans, part of the three million Germans who lived in Bohemia and Moravia. They derived no privileges or benefits whatever from the German *bourgeoisie's* domination in Bohemia; they were, just like the Czech workers, kept in an inferior political and social status and subjected to the class rule of the German-Czech capitalists as well as to the Hapsburgs' autocracy.

I attended many meetings of the Warnsdorf weavers, in which the national question was discussed. To them international Socialism was a faith beyond doubts and qualms, a faith perhaps deduced, unconsciously, from their creed in the Christian conception of the brotherhood of man. They met the nationalist theory of the superiority of the German race simply with derision, and race prejudices were entirely alien to them. I was, to my knowledge, the only Jew in the Warnsdorf movement; but I was never aware of the faintest expression of anti-Semitic discrimination. They even chose for their prospective candidate

\* It might perhaps be of some interest to note that in a book published as a choice of the British Labour Party's Book Service it is asserted that "the internationalism of the German Socialists in Austria was nothing but a veil to cover their loyalty, as members of the ruling race, to the Hapsburgs".  
—Franz Borkenau, *Socialism, National or International*, 1942, p. 120.

for the constituency of which Warnsdorf was a district Benno Karpeles, a Viennese Jew who distinguished himself in the organisation of the workers' co-operatives. Moreover, the wish to see the German parts of Austria united with the Germany of Wilhelm II never entered their minds. Although they were in the closest intercourse with the Germans beyond the boundaries, they had not the slightest desire to come under the rule of the Hohenzollerns' militarist-imperialist caste. Among the Austrian Socialists who remained faithful to the idea of the revolution of 1848—the unity of all Germans in a great German Republic—Engelbert Pernerstorfer was most prominent; however, much as he was respected, his national propaganda found no echo in the workers' circle in which I moved. The vision which inspired the Warnsdorf weavers was the federation of the nations of Europe into a single Socialist commonwealth, a federation of free and equal people.

They resisted as one man the nationalist temptations. The endeavours of the manufacturers to organise in Warnsdorf German trade unions failed signally. But they failed not in Warnsdorf alone; they failed in the whole of those districts of Bohemia which are now called the Sudetenland. The Sudeten German Socialist movement, ably led by Joseph Seliger and Karl Czermak, was the strongest section of the Austrian Party. When, for the first time, the Austrian workers could exercise a limited franchise (in 1897), half of all the parliamentary seats the Socialists gained in all the provinces were obtained in Bohemia and Moravia.

However, a strong section of the Czech Socialists, under the leadership of Anton Nemec, seemed to be less firm than the German in withstanding the infiltration of nationalism into their minds.

Czech and German Socialists had been united in a single party since the revival of the Austrian Labour movement in 1889. The Czech Socialists refused to acknowledge the ancient charter of rights of the former Kingdom of Bohemia (which was an article of creed to every Czech nationalist); in a declaration, read out in Parliament (in 1897), they stated that "as Czechs and Social Democrats we protest against the excavating of withered historical documents and privileges. We are sons of our time, and we demand modern institutions for the Czech people as well as for all nations in Austria. We hold that only by the triumph of Socialism will our people be liberated from humiliating political bondage and national oppression." For this statement the Czech Socialists were ostracised by the furious Czech nationalists as "national traitors". Later, Czech and German Socialists, together with



Polish, Italian and Ruthenian Socialists, fought as comrades-in-arms for universal franchise, and after it had been achieved they fought the general election for the reformed Parliament in 1907 together. This election was a great triumph for the Austrian Socialist International. More than one million votes out of four and a half millions went to the Socialists, and German, Polish, Italian and Ruthenian Socialists who had been elected members of the House formed a single parliamentary group.

Yet soon afterwards the Czech Socialist Party within the Austrian International demanded the separation of the Czech workers in the international trade unions and the right of forming trade unions of their own (therefore they were called Separatists). While the political branch of the international Labour movement in Austria was organised on federal lines, its industrial branch was organised on central lines, as it had to be in a polyglot country where the workers of many nations had to work together in the factories. When, after long negotiations, this demand was rejected, the Czech Socialist Party, defying the decision, formed separate national trade unions.

This conflict was submitted for an impartial decision to the International Socialist Congress at Copenhagen (in 1910). The Congress decided unanimously (except for the five votes of the Czech Separatists) against the splitting of the international trade unions on national lines within a multi-national State. Yet while a few years earlier such a decision had effected the reunification of the two Socialist parties in France, this time it failed to reunite the Czech and German trade unions. The Czech Socialists refused to yield.

It is, however, characteristic that the Czech Socialists succeeded in building national trade unions only in the homogeneous Czech territories of Austria; they failed in territories where many Czech workers lived among German workers, as in Vienna and Moravia. The "centralist" Czech trade unions outnumbered the separatists by three to one. It is further important to note that the Czech Separatists, while disregarding the decision of the International Congress, remained members of the International and affirmed in all their declarations their faithful adherence to the principles of international Socialism.

There is no doubt that these manifestations of international Socialism were honest; yet there is also no doubt that the split of the international trade unions (which was followed by the split of the Czech Socialist Party and the Austrian International) indicated the depth of national antagonism, an antagonism which tore asunder the Austro-Hungarian State when it had to face a major crisis a few years later.

## THE DAY BEFORE THE DELUGE

"We shall not trouble you with specious pretences either of how we have a right to our Empire because we overthrew the Persians, or are now attacking you because of wrong you have done us. You know as well as we do that right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.

"Of the gods we believe, and of the men we know, that by a necessary law of their nature they rule wherever they can. It is not as if we were the first to make this law, or to act upon it when made. We found it in the world before us, and shall leave it in the world after us; all we do is to make use of it, knowing that you and everybody else, having the same power as we have, would do the same as we do."—Athenian Envoy to the Melians, in 416 B.C., Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*.

THE SOCIALISTS of a neighbouring district had arranged a festival as a sort of benediction for a new flag, on Sunday, 28th June, 1914. They had invited the Warnsdorf Socialists, as well as many other Socialist groups, and had asked me to make a speech. So on that day, in the early afternoon, a few hundred Warnsdorf comrades marched in procession, carrying their own banners and flags, to the appointed place at the foot of a hill, where 1000 people from all parts of North Bohemia were already assembled.

In glorious sunlight we then marched together over meadows to the top of the hill where the festival was to take place. At the head of the procession was a band; the new flag followed, still hidden under a black cover; then a forest of red flags, glowing beautifully in the golden rays of the sun; and then, in rows of four, men, women and children. On the top of the hill the multitude formed a semi-circle round a small platform, which was surrounded by the flags, and the celebration began with trumpet chords and songs of the workers' choir. The chairman of the group who had sent out the invitations spoke, bidding welcome to all who had come. Then came my turn to speak.

What I said in my speech was almost the same as what every Socialist said in those days: it was a prayer for peace. I began by describing the peacefulness of the world which we saw unfolded below us: small villages in the folds of the hills, and pasturelands, and cornfields, and forests stretching far into the infinite of the horizon. Then I talked about the fearful signs of an approaching deluge, threatening to devour the fields and forests and villages and the whole of humanity. For everyone who could read the

writing on the wall, I said, this abhorrent menace had grown enormously in acuteness since 1908. I then recalled how the Socialists in every country had done their utmost in warning the world, but I also recalled the hard fact that the Socialists were nowhere strong enough to ward off the threat if it should materialise. "If it is true," I concluded, "that only strong Socialist parties are able to prevent wars, then it is true that we have to redouble our efforts in order to strengthen the movement before it is too late." And, unfurling the new flag, I consecrated it to our fight: "For peace, for the brotherhood of nations, for international working-class solidarity". Trumpets in unison with the voices of the people solemnly intoned the "International", that moving Socialist anthem of the workers of all lands, so full of yearnings for international fraternity.

After the ceremony was concluded, all of us spent the rest of the afternoon in perfect happiness, dancing on the lawn to the strains of the band, or singing in chorus, or playing games with the children, or just talking, and as the sun was setting we went home in high spirits with the feeling that we had done a little towards fostering peace.

When the Wárnsdorf group arrived at the fringe of the town, a comrade rushed towards us. He looked pale and very excited. He told us that a message had just arrived from Vienna saying that the Archduke Franz Ferdinand had been assassinated in Sarajevo by a Serb nationalist.

The news struck me like a thunderbolt from the blue sky. My first reaction was, I frankly confess, one of relief. The Heir Apparent's death could not, indeed, evoke a feeling of compassion. He was perhaps the most disliked man in the Monarchy. His unconcealed impatience to see the old Emperor dead so that he might ascend the throne had shocked the Hapsburg patriots; his greediness and avarice in his dealings with the hard-pressed tenants and farm workers on his fertile estate of Konopitsch had outraged all the common people; his ambitious political designs had filled all hearts with deep misgivings. He was the incarnation of the most sinister reaction in domestic affairs and the most aggressive type of war-monger in foreign affairs. He was the head of the Austrian war party; he persistently urged a war of conquest: at one time against Italy, at another against Serbia. Everyone anticipated the worst should he come into power.

Now he was no more. But the feeling of relief lasted for only a moment. I realised that the war party at the Court, most powerfully entrenched in the Austro-Hungarian general staff and vigorously backed by the German general staff, might now, under the psychological impact of the assassination, force its way upon

public opinion. While we, still in the street, discussed the possible repercussions of this event, every one of us was swayed by the most gloomy foreboding that something terrific was to come. Would the horror of war really descend upon humanity? This prospect made us shudder. It appeared inconceivable that millions should die to redeem the death of one who was always willing to send millions to death. Would millions really be set in motion to slaughter each other? It seemed absurd. Yet we felt that it would happen.

For years we had been obsessed by the fear of war; it was the main theme of our thought and propaganda. Yet, when we were face to face with the imminent emergence of this hideous monster and visualised how it would ravage and devastate the fair earth and massacre blindly the prime of our generation, every nerve of our being refused to believe in the mere possibility that this nightmare could come true. Every consideration of the subterranean forces of society—national, social, economic and imperialistic—pressing for release, and thus generating the war, ceased to weigh any longer; only its frightfulness haunted our minds, and reason revolted against the possibility of a triumph of madness.

Nor was anyone among us able to foresee the tremendous landslide which the shots of Sarajevo would set in motion, still less what would become of the world if it was once engulfed in war.

It is a striking fact in history that the nature of fundamental changes in society is often indiscernible to most human eyes; it seems to be even more difficult to determine the immediate future of human affairs. Even so sagacious a judge as Gibbon, with the most profound insight into history, erred in his evaluation of the greatest event of his time, the French Revolution. When reflecting on the great change in the social and political state of France, he said, writing at the end of 1789: "How many years before France can recover any vigour, or resume her station among the powers of Europe!"\* Yet the Revolution had, unforeseen by Gibbon, developed such colossal popular and military energies that it was able to elevate France within a few years to a position of power in Europe which she had never before attained.

In the beginning of 1914 it was commonly assumed that the balance of power was so perfectly stabilised in Europe that no danger to peace could arise. Even that acute observer of social affairs, H. N. Brailsford, writing in March 1914, could say, in accordance with the prevailing opinion in Europe, "My own belief is that there will be no more wars among the six Great Powers."†

\* H. H. Milman, *Life of Gibbon*, p. 338.

† H. N. Brailsford, *The War of Steel and Gold*, 1914, p. 35.

Brailsford, however, stressed the insecurity of the armed peace from the first page of his book to the last, and qualified his statement by adding: "It is safer to make the modest prediction that if war should break out, it will be for some stake in Turkey or China, and it will end without territorial changes in Europe—a geographical term from which the Balkans must always be excluded". But it was precisely the unsettled state of the Balkans from which sprang the spark of the war; and the balance of power was so precarious that this little spark could set the world ablaze.

It was certainly unbelievable in March 1914 that frictions in the Balkans could engulf the whole world in war. Brailsford's optimism was all the more vindicated by the subsequent British-German agreement concerning the Bagdad railway, concluded only a few weeks before the outbreak of war; it removed the gravest point of conflict between these two Great Powers. Many Socialists in Europe shared Brailsford's feeling.

But many Austrian Socialists took a more pessimistic view of affairs. Perhaps because they lived amidst the seething cauldron into which the strife of the unredeemed nations had transformed the Danube Basin and the Balkans, they felt more acutely the danger that the convulsion caused by these strifes might explode into a catastrophe. Certainly none among us could foresee how the dynamics of events would work. But everyone was aware of the increasing revolt of the Slav nations, inside the Dual Monarchy as well as in the Balkans, against the Hapsburg ascendancy. Of course, these small nations alone could not challenge the Hapsburgs; but the Romanoffs could, and they regarded the Balkans, and especially Serbia, as their sphere of influence. Thus every conflict between Austria and Serbia spelt the danger of a major conflict between Austria and Russia—that is, between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente.

It should, in the first place, be remembered, as H. A. L. Fisher has pointed out, that before 1914, "In no European country had policy been conceived on pacifist lines. Every Foreign Office cherished dreams which might be realised in war. France wanted Alsace-Lorraine. Germany wanted more colonies, a larger navy, and hegemony in the Near East. Austria wanted the subjection of Serbia and a port at Salonika. Russia wanted the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. Serbia had designs on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy on Trieste and Trentino, Roumania on Transylvania, to be obtained from Hungary, or Besarabia, to be wrested from the Russians."\* Every government regarded war as a legitimate means for its covetous ends; they feared war as a leap into the unknown, and yet they hoped for it as the great

\* H. A. L. Fisher, *A History of Europe*, p. 1120.

opportunity which might bring about the realisation of their dreams of aggrandisement.

It should be remembered, further, that in the half-century preceding the war of 1914 the idea of war reached a degree of glorification as perhaps never before in the history of the human race. War was not only accepted, in General Clausewitz' famous words, as "but the continuation of policy by other means"; it was, moreover, accepted, in General von Moltke's phrase, as "a factor in God's plan for the world, and that without war the world would sink into materialism". Even a thinker of such wide humanity as John Ruskin wrote in those days: "By war nations are created, by peace they are destroyed". This perception of war was by no means confined to the German militarists and imperialists; it was the common conception of the nationalists of every nation.

I remember a talk I had with Otto Bauer when I visited him once from Warnsdorf. I mentioned the fantastic designs of the German imperialists, and spoke with disgust about the exaltation of war by German nationalist writers.

"But don't forget," he said, "that the imperialists and nationalists of every nation are of exactly the same flesh and blood. While Paul Rohrbach dreams of a German Empire, stretching from the North Sea to the Persian Gulf, Cecil Rhodes visualised Britain's rule all over Africa, South America, Oceania, the Malay Archipelago, the seaboard of China, Palestine and Mesopotamia. And those were no mere idle visions; they have partly materialised already."

"Yes, I know that. But it is a different thing to revel in the slaughter and misery of wars. That the English do not do. They don't adore brutal force. How could they? Think of Dickens, or Shelley, or Gladstone!"

"How naive you are, my good boy," he replied, laughing. "Just dip a little deeper into English literature; you'll be surprised. You will learn, for instance, that the 'divine right of force' was fostered as much by Carlyle, Kingsley and Ruskin as by Treitschke in Germany and Daudet in France. We have our Hegels; they have their Bagehots and Bosanquets. We have our Bernhardis, Maltzahns and Tirpitz; they have their Roberts, Crambs and Spenser Wilkinsons. Only a few years ago they founded a chair of military history at Oxford University to counter pacifism, and of course it was Spenser Wilkinson who was to occupy it, for, after all, he is Bernhardi's most faithful disciple."

Indeed, it was for me a great revelation in later years, when studying English political literature, to learn that English nationalistic ideology had developed exactly the same philosophy as the

German (though the humanitarian, pacifist and anti-imperialist trend of public opinion was far stronger in Britain than in Germany). I found in both the English and German nationalistic writings the same sanctification of the State, the same exaltation of war, the same contempt for pacifism, cosmopolitanism and humanitarianism. While Hegel revels in the State as "the Divine idea as it exists on earth",\* Cramb sanctifies empires as "successive incarnations of the Divine ideas".† And since State and empire are considered to be laws unto themselves, there exists only the right of the strong. Bülow frankly admitted: "I feel no embarrassment in saying here publicly that for Germany right can never be a governing consideration".‡ The same mood of thought (of course so far as it was for the good of England) was expressed by the Poet Laureate in the following neat poem (on the occasion of the Jameson Raid):

"Let lawyers and statesman addle  
Their pates over points of law;  
If sound be our sword and saddle  
And gun-gear, who cares one straw?" §

This definition of right was deliberated at length by Hegel. He dismissed the idealistic demand that policy should confirm morals. "It is only proper to remark on this score," he says, "that the good of a State has a justification quite other than the good of the individual; and that the ethical substance, the State, has its being, e.g. its right, directly, not in an abstract existence, but in a concrete one; and that is the only possible principle of its conduct and behaviour in this concrete existence, and not one of the general concepts that are held to be moral commands."¶ And so he held that since there were no universal laws, but only a number of different systems of morality valid for different States, it follows that there could be no morality in the relations which these self-contained units had with each other. International relations were based upon force alone. Hegel therefore believed that war was the ultimate and necessary means to the settlement of international disputes. He therefore consistently considered war beyond right or wrong, for each belligerent fights for its own highest right—the interest of the State.

"... let a prince have the credit of conquering and holding his State, the means will always be considered honest, and he will

\* W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, p. 41.

† J. A. Cramb, *Reflections on the Origins and Destiny of Imperial Britain*, 1900, p. 304.

‡ Speech in the German Reichstag on December 13, 1900.

§ This poem was published in *The Times* on January 11, 1896; it is quoted by E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis*, 1940, p. 236.

¶ W. F. Hegel, *Philosophie des Rechtes*, final passage (par. 272).

be praised by everybody,"\* wrote Machiavelli in 1513; his philosophy of the amorality of the State remained in force another 400 years. Just as Machiavelli unblushingly set out the practical advantages of war, violence, cruelty and bad faith, judiciously employed by the rulers, so did writers of every nation in the decades prior to the First World War. "As a nation we are brought up to feel it a disgrace ever to succeed by falsehood," recalls a British military manual, written by an illustrious hand. "We keep hammering along with the conviction that honesty is the best policy, and that truth always wins in the long run. These sentiments do well for a copy-book, but a man who acts upon them had better sheath his sword for ever."†

Machiavelli held that only "that war is just which is necessary".‡ The modern philosophers of nationalism and imperialism of every tongue have worked very hard to convince the common people that war in itself is outside the sphere of justice and injustice, because it is an emanation of humanity as it is. "It is the fashion now to denounce war as wicked," complains, for instance, Spenser Wilkinson. But war, he insists, is beyond good and evil. "The question is not," he says, "whether war is moral—we do not ask whether the earthquake, the flood or the lightning is moral." § War is, he says, "a part of the real world", a "part of the struggle of society for self-realisation"; and as every healthy society, as organised in the State, is bound to grow and to expand at the expense of other States, as he believes, conflicts between States are inevitable. In order not to be submerged by other States, every State has to forestall this event by striving to obtain the ascendancy over the others. He quotes approvingly Admiral von Moltzahn's definition of the real aim of wars; Moltzahn said: "War has for its aim to compel peace upon our conditions. Armed peace aims at preparing means for war in such strength and in such a state of readiness that the enemy, the State with whose interests our interests conflict, will remain at peace under our conditions." And Spenser Wilkinson adds: "Let us, above all things, be fair; let us recognise that the German writer . . . is, after all, only copying English models. No less a statesman than the Earl of Rosebery . . . described the British ideal as 'peace secured by preponderance', which is only an epigrammatic way of putting the thought expressed by Admiral Moltzahn."¶

\* Nicolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chap. 18, Everyman's Library ed., p. 140.

† Quoted by John Morley, *Miscellanies*, 4th series, p. 45.

‡ Nicolo Machiavelli, *ibid.*, p. 207.

§ Spenser Wilkinson, *Government and War*, 1918, p. 94.

¶ Spenser Wilkinson, *ibid.*, p. 121.



It follows from this conception of the State, and of force, and of right, that war is to be regarded, as another distinguished English writer said, "as a phase in the life-effort of the State towards completer self-realisation . . . the perpetual omnipresent strife of all beings towards self-fulfilment. . . . War is thus a manifestation of the world-spirit." He even arrives at the conclusion that "the battlefield is an altar" \*.

If the State is to be regarded as "God walking upon earth", as Hegel assumed, and war as "the supreme act in the life of the State", as Cramb intimated, then mutual slaughter must surely be an edifying source of great moral force, because it appears to be the most sublime expression of the divine idea of the State.

The humble human mind might, however, be puzzled by the contradiction between the assumed sanctity of human life and the prevailing sanctification of war as the means of mass destruction of lives. It was the German historian Heinrich von Treitschke who took great pains in his endeavour to silence the disturbed human conscience and to reconcile morality with brutality. "Just where, to the superficial observer, war appears as something brutal and inhuman," he says in a famous passage of his *Politik*, "we have learnt to discern its moral force. That, for the sake of the fatherland, men should stifle their natural human feelings, that they should murder one another, men who have done each other no wrong. At first sight this seems the revolting side of war; and yet herein consists its grandeur. A man must sacrifice not only his life, but also the profoundly just and natural impulses of the human soul. We must renounce the whole ego for the sake of the great patriotic idea. Therein lies the moral sublimity of war."

This idea of the "moral sublimity of war" permeates Carlyle's writings, to whom, nineteen centuries after Christ, as to Aristotle four centuries before Christ, war is neither anti-religious nor inhuman, but the evidence in the life of a State of a self-consecration to an ideal end. He pays profound homage to the great Berserker Olaf Tryggvason, the old Norse King, and delights in painting, in his *Frederic and Cromwell*, a mighty series of battles; Carlyle faced the phenomenon of war with deepest awe. Even the tender mind of Tennyson became enchanted when seeing "once more the banner of battle unroll'd" (*Maud*).

The sanctification of war has, in the half-century before the war of 1914, been, furthermore, fostered by the biological conception of nationalism, derived from Darwin's, Huxley's and A. R. Wallace's laws of physical struggle and natural selection. "War is in the first place," wrote the German General von Bernhardi

\* J. A. Cramb, *ibid.*, pp. 173, 211.

(in his *Germany and the Next War*, 1911), "a biological necessity, a regulator of the life of mankind which is quite indispensable". And the English writer, J. Ellis Barker, suggests that "Nature is ruled by the law of the struggle for existence and of the survival of the fittest and the strongest. . . . The abolition of war," he warns, "would be a misfortune to mankind. It would lead not to the survival of the fittest and the strongest, but to the survival of the sluggard and the unfit, and therefore to the degeneration of the human race."\* It is therefore in the real interest of a vigorous race, Professor Karl Pearson maintained, to be "kept up to a high pitch of external efficiency by contest, chiefly by way of war. . . . This is the natural history view of mankind."†

Professor Pearson regards war, above all, as an indispensable requirement for maintaining the equilibrium between the size of the population and the means to sustain it. "You may hope for a time," he says, "when the sword shall be turned into the ploughshare, when American and German and English traders shall no longer compete in the markets of the world for their raw material and for their food supply, when the white man and the dark share the soil between them, and each tills it as he lists. But, believe me, when that day comes, mankind will no longer progress; there will be nothing to check the fertility of inferior stock; the relentless law of heredity will not be controlled and guided by natural selection. Man will stagnate; and unless he ceases to multiply, the catastrophe will come again; famine and pestilence, as we see them in the East, physical selection instead of the struggle of race against race, will do the work more relentlessly, and, to judge from India and China, far less efficiently than of old."‡

About a hundred years before Professor Pearson wrote his essay, Malthus contended (in his essay on *The Principle of Population*, published in 1798), that "Population has a constant tendency to increase beyond the means of subsistence. . . . Population, when unchecked, increases in a geometrical ratio. . . . The means of subsistence could not possibly be made to increase more than in an arithmetical ratio." This doctrine had a prodigious success in England. Ricardo and the Benthamites adopted it; Darwin and Spencer were influenced by it.

But meanwhile experience had demonstrated the fallacy of Malthus' hypothesis. The productive capacity of humanity grew faster than the size of population. When Malthus wrote his

\* J. Ellis Barker, *Great and Greater Britain*, 1905, p. 25.

† Karl Pearson, *National Life from the Standpoint of Science*, 1901, p. 44.

‡ Karl Pearson, *ibid.*, p. 24.

essay, the people dwelling on European soil numbered about 180 millions; when Professor Pearson wrote his essay, this number had increased to 450 millions, in addition to more than seventy millions who had emigrated to America in the same period. And the standard of living of all of them had also considerably improved.

Yet Professor Pearson maintains that just as in the jungle only the strong and beautiful survive, thanks to the struggle for existence, so only the struggle between the races and nations is able to produce higher forms of life and civilisation. "This struggle of tribe with tribe, and nation with nation, may have its mournful side; but we see as a result of it the gradual progress of mankind to higher intellectual and physical efficiency." And in his philosophy of history he sees that "the path of progress is strewn with the wreck of nations; traces are everywhere to be seen of the hecatombs of inferior races, and of the victims who found not the narrow way to the greater perfection. Yet these peoples are, in very truth, the stepping-stones on which mankind has arisen to the higher intellectual and deeper emotional life of to-day."\* In a more delightful form, even before Professor Pearson, this theory was evolved by Kipling (in his *Jungle Books*). He let the beasts of the jungle teach his hero, little Mowgli, the law of the jungle, which maintains the balance of the species at the cost of never-ending, truceless struggles. And the moral of Kipling's story is that the beasts of the jungle show the human beings that only by wars will they become stronger and more beautiful.

Yet if war is accepted as a biological necessity, then universal peace appears to be a violation of the natural law of development. "It is proposed," General von Bernhardi argues, "that the great disputes of people and States should be settled by courts of arbitration. . . . It is proposed that . . . formal law should be substituted for historic decisions, that the same right to exist should be accorded to the weak people as to the strong, vigorous people. All this constitutes a presumptuous encroachment upon the natural law of development, an encroachment which could only lead to the worst results for the whole of humanity." From this theory follows consistently the view, as an English writer confirms, that "humanitarianism is a disease of the instinct to preserve the race",† and perpetual peace not only, as Treitschke expressed it, an "ignoble dream", but a real calamity. "Indeed," says Professor Cramb, "in the light of History, universal peace appears less a dream than a nightmare which shall be realised

\* Karl Pearson, *ibid.*, pp. 58 ff.

† H. G. F. Surrrell, *Patriotism. A Biological Study*, 1911, p. 99.

‘only when the ice has crept to the heart of the sun, and the stars, left black and traceless, start from their orbit.’\*

From this biological conception of nationalism follows, further, the conception of the right of conquest. Ian Colvin, for example, justifies Britain’s imperialist aspirations by the struggle for existence, as imposed upon humanity by Nature. “Nature teaches us,” he says, “that all life is engaged in a perpetual struggle for existence, out of which neither men nor nations can contract. The security and livelihood of forty-five million people is surely sufficient justification for our imperial development. We did not do it for the sake of other people, but of ourselves.”†

Conquest is regarded not only as a normal means of securing *lebensraum* for nations, but also as the ultimate test of their strength of character. The very distinguished English writer, Walter Bagehot, for years the editor of *The Economist*, said: “Conquest is the premium given by nature to those national characters which their national customs have made most fit to win in war, and in most material respects those winning characters are really the best characters. The characters which do win in war are the characters which we should wish to win in war.”‡

But, to round off the argument, if conquest is regarded as permissible, then aggressive wars cannot be condemned. Indeed, Lord Roberts admired Bismarck and Moltke precisely for their ruthlessness as aggressors; they struck relentlessly, in 1866 and 1870, when, as Lord Roberts observes, they thought that Germany’s hour to strike had arrived. That is, Lord Roberts remarks, “an excellent policy. It is, or should be, the policy of every nation prepared to play a great part in history.”§

It might perhaps be useful to remember that these views were not always the dominant views of the middle classes. At the time of the rise of the middle-class democracy in Britain, France and Germany this philosophy was definitely repudiated. The French middle class, in its hour of triumph, proclaimed solemnly (in Article IV of the *Constitution* of 1791): “The French nation renounces undertaking war with the intention of conquest and will never employ its forces against the liberty of other people”. And when in 1848, after the close of the era of imperial and royal France, the middle class again came into power, they stated in the new *Constitution* (of 1848): “The French Republic respects foreign nations as she expects to be respected by them. She will never wage war with the aim of conquest and will never employ

\* J. A. Cramb, *ibid.*, p. 209.

† Ian Colvin, *The Origins of Empire*, Introduction.

‡ Walter Bagehot, *Physics and Politics* (2nd. ed.), p. 215.

§ Lord Roberts in his speech in Manchester, October 1912.

her forces against the liberty of other people." In England, the Gladstonian Liberals were fighting against Beaconsfield's imperialism; they evacuated Afghanistan and the Transvaal, and abandoned Gordon at Khartoum to a death which they refused to avenge. Led by Joseph Chamberlain in the 'nineties, a considerable part of the English middle class, however, accepted the imperialist doctrine.

Such, then, was the mood of thought which prevailed among the masters of Europe before 1914. The foreign relations among the European States were based on the law of the jungle. In 1914, then, nothing extraordinary happened; the law of the jungle was just put into operation, according to the tradition and philosophy of the time. The unsophisticated people, however, were left wondering to what lengths hypocrisy could be pushed when observing how, afterwards, the belligerent masters of this jungle indignantly accused each other of having resorted to the same law which every one of them had recognised hitherto as the only possible, valid and even sacred law.

But such was not the mood of the common people. To the workers and peasants right was right, and war the most appalling calamity which could befall humanity. To them the idea that war, as Hindenburg once said, is a refreshing "bath of steel" was revolting. When, then, in 1914, the law of the jungle was applied, the masters of it hastened to protest that every one of them had always repudiated that hideous law, and that now arms were to be taken up to restore the "reign of right". Unfortunately, most of the people of every country believed what they had been told by their governments, and they responded to the call to arms in order to defend their country and "international law"—which, of course, had never existed—against a wanton attack by wicked nations.

The European Socialists, or at any rate most of their intellectual leaders, regarded war as an integral factor of this anarcho-acquisitive society. They did not believe that war could be eliminated by a change of the minds of men (as the non-Socialist pacifists suggested); they held that war could be eliminated only by a change of the political and economic order of society.

But there were also many Socialists who regarded war, as Karl Marx said, as a "locomotive of world history"; they thought that war released the gigantic subterranean social and political forces and accelerated tremendously the pace of historic progress. The Franco-Prussian War was followed by the overthrow of Napoleon III, the proclamation of the French Republic and the revolutions of the Paris Commune; the Boer War generated the collapse of the Conservative rule in England; the Russo-

Japanese War generated the Russian Revolution. It was assumed that if a European war should occur, capitalist society would not survive it. Socialist revolutions all over the Continent would emerge from the war, overthrow the ruling classes and unite the countries into the United Socialist States of Europe.

Although, then, every Socialist genuinely hated war as the negation of Socialist principles and as a major disaster for all humanity, some Socialists (as for example Lenin) reckoned realistically with it as a mighty promoter of revolutions.

Yet, as the days passed quietly after the incident at Sarajevo, most Socialists dismissed the fear of an imminent menace of war. As late as the evening of July 23, at a conference of Austrian Socialist leaders, all of them (with two exceptions) expressed the opinion that war was out of the question; two hours after the adjournment of the conference the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia was officially announced.\*

It should, however, be remembered that there had not been a major war for more than forty years preceding 1914, and that the European generation of 1914, which had never experienced war, refused to believe in its possibility.

This inability of the European Socialists—above all, of the Austrians, who were on the danger spot—to realise the signs of the time turned out to be a great catastrophe. Had the Austrian Socialists warned the Socialist International in good time, it would have been possible to organise all over Europe a powerful concerted action of resistance against the impending menace. It is difficult to say whether or not such a campaign would have warded off the disaster; but it can perhaps be said that the Socialists in the belligerent countries, if prepared for the advent of war, would have acted less deplorably than they actually did. At least this disaster might have been averted.

I myself was extremely disturbed. To assuage my anxiety I went, as I had so often gone before, to Leipzig the following weekend, to discuss the situation with my friends Hans Block (to whom I had been introduced by Hilferding) and Paul Hertz (whom I met at a mutual friend's).

Hans Block was the editor of the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, a distinguished Socialist daily with a brilliant Left tradition; among its contributors were Rosa Luxemburg and Franz Mehring. Hans Block succeeded Paul Lensch as editor. Lensch also belonged to the Marxian Left, but during the war became a German nationalist. Block, however, maintained the international tradition of the paper and opposed persistently, from the beginning of the war until its end, the policy of the Majority

\* Friedrich Adler, *Vor dem Ausnahmegericht*, 1923, p. 197.

Socialists. Paul Hertz, who later became a member of the Reichstag and the Secretary of the Social Democratic parliamentary group in the German Republic, worked on the paper.

Hans Block took a more optimistic view of events than I did; it was the view prevailing among the German Socialists. He was inclined to doubt the immediate outbreak of a European war, because, as he said, "the risk is too big for them". He meant, of course, the risk of social upheavals which might occur during or at the end of war and threaten the Hohenzollern régime.

"But could it not be," I replied, "that just because the German rulers feel themselves menaced by the Red Flood, they might rather plunge the world into war in order to reinforce their régime by a victory?"

"That is certainly possible," he said, "but not very likely. The risk for them, as I said, is too big. They would gamble with all they have and their necks too."

"But assuming that they go to war, what will the Party do?" I asked.

"Well," he answered slowly, "then I think that there won't be very much left for it to do, except to protest. For I take it for granted that on the eve of the war all Socialist leaders will be arrested and the whole movement will be suppressed."

"And what about the workers? Wouldn't they answer such a challenge with strikes and insurrection?"

"It is very difficult to predict anything of what might happen in such a case," he said. "You must remember two things: first, that on the eve of war martial law will be proclaimed and the coercive power of the State will assume proportions of ruthlessness inconceivable now; secondly, the whole non-Socialist Press will let loose a flood of nationalist propaganda, the effects of which can't be foreseen."

"So you think that there will be neither mass strikes nor revolutionary risings?"

"No, I don't think they're possible," he replied, "at any rate in the first stage of the war. When a war breaks out, the people are either numb with horror, intoxicated by nationalist lies, or intimidated by martial law. The proclamation of war produces the most unfavourable condition for revolution."

"But don't worry," he added. "There will be no war. There may be some troubles in the Balkans, but Germany, I'm certain, will not go to war. The risk is too big."

But while we sat together quietly talking the die was already cast. Only a few days after the assassination at Sarajevo, on July 7, the Crown Council, consisting of seven Counts, assembled in the

Red Salon of the Ballhaus Palais. They included Count Berchtold, Foreign Minister of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the Austrian Prime Minister, Count Stürgkh, the Hungarian Prime Minister, Count Tisza, the War Minister, the Chief of Staff of the Austro-Hungarian Army, the Commander of the Fleet, and the Finance Minister. When, after Hapsburg's collapse, Otto Bauer became Foreign Secretary, and thus master of the noble baroque palace opposite the Hofburg in whose gorgeous rooms the congress of kings and princes of Europe had taken counsel after Napoleon's fall, he showed me the salon where this conspiracy was forged, and the oval agate table round which the conspirators had sat on tall gilded chairs. It was Otto Bauer who exposed the plot; he published the minutes of this meeting (*Diplomatic Documents Concerning the Origin of the War*) at which, literally, a world war was unleashed by seven Counts.

It is frequently said that the people are responsible for the doings of their government; the Treaty of Versailles, for example, indicted the German people as being guilty of a war which had been brought about in this way.

At this Crown Council, on July 7, 1914, Count Berchtold, when opening the conference, put the question (I am quoting the actual words of the protocol), "Whether the moment had not arrived to render Serbia forever harmless by a manifestation of strength". He had, he said, already "got into touch with the German Government", and he was able to inform the Ministers that "the Kaiser, as well as Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, had emphatically assured them of Germany's full support in the event of war-like complications". He did not wish, he added, to conceal anything, and "was of the definite opinion that a clash of arms with Serbia might lead to war with Russia". Russia's policy, however, was, in the long run, to obtain the union of the Balkan States against Austria. It was therefore the "logical conclusion" for Austria to anticipate her opponents and to stop this already swiftly developing strategy by means of an opportune reckoning with Serbia. Count Berchtold therefore demanded a declaration of war.

The Hungarian Prime Minister uttered a warning against such an adventure. But Count Stürgkh, the Austrian Prime Minister, summoned all his eloquence in order to point out that "a psychological situation had arisen which in his opinion demanded a military break with Serbia". He suggested therefore that "if for international reasons the path of previous diplomatic representations were trod, that this might be done with the firm intention that such representations might only end with war". The War



Minister, who then spoke, also thought "that a diplomatic success was of no value . . . that it was more profitable to make war now than at a later date".

These were the "conclusions" at which the Crown Council arrived: "All present, with the exception of the Hungarian Prime Minister, are of the opinion that a purely diplomatic success, even if it ended with the striking humiliation of Serbia, would be worthless, and that therefore such far-reaching demands should be addressed to Serbia that a refusal may be anticipated, in order that a radical solution in the form of military aggression may be brought about".

The conspiracy against the peace of the world was thus sealed; the death-warrant of uncounted millions was duly signed.

## PART II

### CHAPTER ELEVEN

#### THE FALL OF THE SOCIALISTS

“Chaos of thought and passion, all confused!”—Pope, *Essay on Man*.

IT HAS often been said in history books that the people “rushed to arms” in 1914, when war was declared.

As far as I was concerned, I did not “rush” when, on July 29—the day after the Austrian declaration of war on Serbia—I received a written order to join my regiment without delay. I quietly liquidated my job and bade farewell to my dear colleague Augsten (whom I was never to see again) and to many other friends. Next morning I took the train for Vienna, where my regiment (Fortification Artillery Regiment No. 1) was stationed.

Even after I had arrived in Vienna I was in no hurry in getting to my barracks. I wanted to have a few quiet hours with my mother, and I also wanted to see some of my friends. So I let another day pass before I reported to my unit.

By August 9 our regiment had left Vienna for the front. I was unable to observe any sign of war enthusiasm among the comrades of my unit or among the people in the streets. That morning, before leaving the Arsenal, my whole regiment heard a general appeal in the barracks’ yard. Our commander made a speech, then we had to swear another oath of allegiance to the Emperor, then the band played the national anthem, while the regimental flag was lowered, and off we marched in full battle-dress, with lots of 15-cm. howitzers at the head of the column, to the station half a mile away. The streets through which we marched were lined with thousands of people, mostly relatives and friends of the soldiers; my mother and my sisters and brothers were among them. I heard hardly any shouts of joy; what struck me most were the shouts of despair, and the tears in the eyes of the mothers.

How could it have been otherwise? Seldom in history was a crime of this magnitude plotted in such a jumble of levity and perfidy as was the First World War. I knew little more than the man in the street. I did not know that Count Berchtold had informed Count Tisza on June 30, only two days after the assassination of

the Heir Apparent, that he was bent on going to war. I did not know that on July 7 the Crown Council, assembled for the most insidious conspiracy ever plotted against humanity, had decided to make war against Serbia in full awareness that it was bound to let loose the cataclysm of a world war. Nor did I know that Kaiser Wilhelm and the German General Staff encouraged and urged the Austrian Government to carry out their foul plot. All these facts I learned only after the war, when the secret archives were opened and disgorged the confessions of the culprits.

What I knew then, however, was quite sufficient to convince me (and every thinking person) that the rulers of the Hapsburg Empire had wantonly provoked the war; every word of the supercilious ultimatum to Serbia was a piece of unanswerable evidence of their guilt. I also knew how the Hapsburgs had treated small, helpless Serbia through all the years before (though it must be admitted that Serbian nationalism, fanned by Russian imperialism, was also partly responsible for the embittered relations between the two countries). Serbia's economic weal and woe was dependent on the willingness of the Hapsburg Government to permit her to sell her cattle in the Austrian market, because Serbia had no others. Serbia had no access to the sea, and her territory was bordered by Hapsburg territory on the north and west. The Hapsburg Government, however, was prepared to enter into trade negotiations with Serbia only under the condition that Serbia bought cannon and railway material from Austria alone, even if she could obtain these goods from other countries at a lower price. Serbia, of course, rejected this condition, and so there were no markets (or only very restricted markets) in Austria for her.

Serbia now attempted to escape this calamity by concluding a customs union with Bulgaria. Austria, however, intervened and compelled Serbia to renounce the Serbo-Bulgarian treaty. Serbia then attempted to build a railway to the Adriatic, so as to be able to export her agricultural products to the western countries; Austria frustrated this enterprise too (1908). When the Balkan countries finally liberated the Peninsula by war from Turkish rule, Serbia sought to gain access to the sea by unification with Albania; Austria again thwarted this attempt. At the same time the Hapsburgs annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, former Turkish territories, inhabited mainly by Serbs. Thus Hapsburg policy strangled Serbia in every way, economically, politically, nationally. I understood the hatred which the Serbs and Croats harboured against the Hapsburgs; I shared it.

So, from the first moment, I was aware of the iniquity of this war. The idea that this war was a war of defence never entered

my mind. Defence against whom? Small Serbia, exhausted by two recent wars, was no menace to the Hapsburg colossus, and, as a matter of fact, she complied with every point of the arrogant ultimatum save one, which was designed to obliterate her independence. Nor was the idea more attractive (for me or for most Austrians) to sacrifice our "blood and treasures for the Emperor and the fatherland". As far as the Emperor was concerned, Kaiser Francis Joseph I was not the man to inspire human feelings towards himself, because one could hardly feel that a human being was wrapped in the imperial robe. He had already reigned for sixty-six years; he had become an impersonal institution. Between the Emperor and the common people yawned an impassable abyss. He never moved among "his people", even if they were in dire distress, and never in his life had he shaken hands with a man of a lower station than a count; this rule was strictly observed by him even towards the commoners among his Ministers, generals, high Court servants and his physicians in ordinary. He was the "Crown", and nothing else.

The Crown, symbolising the Austrian "idea", evoked still fewer sentiments of allegiance. For most Austrians, Austria was not their "fatherland". About two-thirds of the Austrian people were Slavs; they, rightly or wrongly, hated to live in this State, which the Hapsburgs never succeeded in making a home for the people they ruled. The German Austrians were divided in their sentiments of allegiance. The German upper class accepted Austria so long as its ascendancy over the Slav nations remained unimpaired; the German intellectuals aspired to unification with the Reich; the German workers accepted Austria without love, as a matter of expediency, and tried to make the best of a bad job; the German peasants cherished parochial, but not imperial, loyalty. Genuine Austrian patriots were only members of the nobility, the officer corps of the army, the higher ranks of the bureaucracy, the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church and, influenced by the Church, the lower middle class of Vienna, organised by Karl Lueger into the Christian Social Party. Putting together all these groups, they were a comparatively thin crust of the Austrian people.

For what, then, did we go to the front? What was the "cause" we were called on to fight and to die for? This query tortured my conscience, and I could not find an answer to it.

But soon it became worse. On August 5 I was in my barracks when I eagerly opened the *Arbeiter Zeitung*. It reported that the Social Democrats of Germany had voted for the war credits the day before, and the leading article, headed "The Day of the German Nation", welcomed this step with exuberant enthusiasm.

The article contended that Germany had now to fight "for her independence as a State and for her national honour" against a mean enemy coalition which lacked "every moral idea"; and that since the "German fatherland is imperilled" and the "national independence of the people is menaced", the Social Democrats had rightly resolved to lend to the State "the blood of the working people". The article refused to discuss the question of war guilt. "Whether the diplomats acted wisely, the future may decide"; now "German life is at stake, and there must be no wavering or faint-heartedness". And the *Arbeiter Zeitung* prayed from the depth of its heart that "the holy cause of the German people might be victorious".

Did my eyes deceive me? Was the paper which I had in my hands really the *Arbeiter Zeitung*? Hitherto I was used to reading such stuff only in German nationalist papers. Social Democratic papers sometimes spoke of the "holy cause of the international working class"; it was for the first time that such a paper spoke of the "holy cause of the German people". I had learned from the *Arbeiter Zeitung* that the workers ought to fight for the sake of Socialism, in Germany as elsewhere in the world; and I had learned that the enemies of Socialism were to be found in Germany as well as in every other country, but that the working classes of all countries were brothers, and united in purpose. Now I learned that it was the duty of the working class to defend "to the last drop of blood the national honour of Germany". That was amazing indeed.

Nor was I able to understand why the German Social Democrats had voted for the war credits—men and money for this detestable war. Had not the Socialists, for years and years, indicted the rulers of Germany for their imperialist policy, for their naval policy, for the braggart and threatening language the Kaiser used in his speeches on foreign affairs? They had warned that this policy must lead to war. On the same day when Austria's ultimatum to Serbia became known in Berlin, the German Social Democratic Party issued a manifesto protesting "in the name of humanity and civilisation against the criminal activity of the warmongers"; it sounded the alarm: "A world war threatens!"; it declared most solemnly: "Let it everywhere resound in the ears of those in power: we will not have war!" And on the very day when Austria declared war on Serbia, on July 28, in thirty-two big meetings in Berlin and in many hundreds all over the Reich, the Socialists raised their voice of protest against the impending crime. Yet, when the war did come, they rallied behind the guilty men. Even assuming that it was true that the German Government had not willed the war, but was

"compelled to wage war by Austria's action", as Bethmann-Hollweg stated on this fateful 4th of August, how could Germany permit Austria to take an action which involved the Reich, and the whole world, in war?

At any rate, Austria's war was not a war of defence, but a war of aggression against little Serbia; it was not a war of the Austrian people, it was the war of the House of Hapsburg. What had Socialists to do with such a war? On the eve of the Austro-Serbian war, the Social Democratic Executive had issued a manifesto, stating: "The common people are deprived of the right to decide on war and peace. The Parliament through which they used to speak has been silenced. Freedom of speech in meetings and freedom of Press is fettered. In awareness of this fateful hour let our warning cry once more be heard: Peace is men's dearest possession, is the people's greatest need." And with all emphasis the manifesto declared: "We refuse to take any responsibility for this war; we lay the whole responsibility for the war on those who have caused it".

This was the language of the Party even a few days before the outbreak of the war. But now it had joined with those who were responsible for the war and had hailed the war as a war for the "holy cause of the German people".

Through all the years since I had entered the movement I respected the declarations of the Party as the expression of a well-considered Socialist policy, and every word of the *Arbeiter Zeitung* as the sublime manifestation of the undiluted Socialist spirit. How could I explain the present sentiments of the *Arbeiter Zeitung*?

In despondency I searched for my friends to talk over my doubts and qualms. Otto Bauer had already left for the front; so had Robert Lackenbacher (who was killed in action a few months later). I went to the editorial office of the *Arbeiter Zeitung*. Whenever I was on leave from Warnsdorf and visited the editorial members of that paper I was cheerfully received as a colleague. Even Friedrich Austerlitz, the almost inaccessible and most intractable editor, would talk paternally with me about small and large affairs of policy. This time I met only bewildered and gloomy faces, and I was advised by my friends that I had better not enter the den of the lion. Indeed, his voice roared through the door of his study, and when I was still chatting with a few colleagues in the corridor of the office, Austerlitz's door was suddenly pushed open, and out he rushed, with such an expression of fury, annoyance and despair, as if haunted by Erinyes. I noticed that he was scarcely in a mood that day for a nice little talk.

I went to the headquarters of the Party on the first floor of the

same house. Neither Robert Danneberg nor Julius Deutsch was in. I walked through one empty room after the other. Suddenly I found myself face to face with Friedrich Adler. I had never seen him before.

I had been introduced to his father, Victor Adler, by Benno Karpeles, prospective candidate for the Warnsdorf constituency, on my first leave, and since then I had met him every time I went to Vienna. He seemed to take a very kind interest in my work and in the ways of my life, and sometimes asked me trifling questions which appeared to me hardly worthy of attention. I felt such a warmth and humanity in his approach that even my strong inhibition, caused by my veneration for him, lost a little of its force. When I now introduced myself to his son, he seemed somehow aware who I was, for his deep, luminous eyes sparkled when I told him my name. I recognised him immediately as Victor Adler's son, for though his features were a little more regular than those of his father, the resemblance to the latter was astounding. He had the same shape of forehead, the same haircut and moustache, even the same collar and tie, and, above all, the same penetrating warmth and kindness in his big blue eyes; however, he was taller than his father and more robust.

I had already known something about his life. I knew that he had studied chemistry and physics in Switzerland and that he was a lecturer in mathematical physics at Zurich University, and at the same time the editor of the leading Swiss Socialist daily, *Das Volksrecht*. This combination of work was rather rare in the movement, and therefore frequently spoken of. I had also heard that he had published some studies on the theories of Mach and Ostwald, and one on Friedrich Engels' scientific writings. In 1911 he moved from Zürich to Vienna, and was appointed secretary of the Party, joint editor of the *Kampf* and editor of a small popular bi-weekly, *Das Volk*, the outspoken language of which had always been to my liking.

He wanted, first of all, to know how the Warnsdorf workers had reacted to the proclamation of war and in what sort of mood they had joined the forces. After I had told him my impressions, I begged him urgently to explain to me the war policy of the Party. He looked at me for a while, with a scrutinising and yet anxious and somehow painful look, then he shrugged his shoulders almost imperceptibly, without saying a word. When I took leave, telling him that I was to go to the front in a few days, he gripped my hand firmly and looked at me searchingly.

I was glad to be sent to the front without any delay. In this feeling I was certainly not enticed by the "adventures" war has to offer. I was by no means keen on its sanguinary distractions;

my romantic sense was perfectly satisfied with the world at peace.

Nor did I want to go to the front out of a sense of duty. I felt no overpowering duty towards "Emperor and fatherland". I had not the faintest sentiment of patriotism. I felt no national duty towards Germany either; national sentiment was entirely alien to me. When I went to the front my heart was filled with grim hatred of the Hapsburgs and Hohenzollerns, who, I felt, were responsible for the monstrous crime of the war. I wished fervently for their defeat, because I wanted to see them punished and, above all, because I held that, should they win the war, no upright man in either of these empires would be able to breathe freely again; but should they lose the war, they would be overthrown.

I wanted to go to the front for two main reasons. Firstly, because I wanted to share the dangers and trials of the life there with the millions of workers and peasants who had to face them; I should have detested the idea of shirking what was the lot of almost the whole of the European youth. Secondly, I wanted to escape what appeared to me to be an intellectual and moral misery which had engulfed the Socialist movement, though I felt that escapism was surely not the subterfuge of an heroic character. The collapse of the world of ideas in which I had lived hitherto came so suddenly, and the confusion of thought and passion was so bewildering, that I did not see a way out of it.

Life at the front left me ample time for thinking and reading about the crisis of Socialism; friends at home provided me with papers, pamphlets, political books and magazines. Slowly I perceived the depth of the truly tragic conflict into which the Socialist movement had been plunged. I became aware of a complicated maze of contradictions between ideal and reality, of necessities which apparently knew no law and which seemed to have submerged the paramount supremacy of principle.

My sentiments concerning State and nation had been inspired (as were the sentiments of so many young Socialists of my days) by two different schools of thought. It was, firstly, the school of "naïve cosmopolitanism", to use Otto Bauer's term, as represented in the sentiment of the men of French Enlightenment, English Romanticism and German Classics. Lessing, Tom Paine, Condorcet, Shelley, Kant, Gibbon and Goethe felt they were rather citizens of the world than of any particular country. I grew up in their ideas; I aspired to live up to Goethe's words when he said (to Eckermann): "There is a degree of culture where national hatred vanishes, and where one stands to a certain extent above nations and feels the weal and woe of a neighbouring



people as if it happened to one's own". I myself felt, by sentiment and reflection, a "citizen of the world", and if there was discernible in my feelings a trace of patriotism at all, it was of the kind which Lord Shaftesbury rejects as false patriotism—namely, the "patriotism of the soil".\* I loved the Austrian Alps, their beautiful valleys and lakes, and I loved Vienna, Salzburg and many of the smaller Austrian towns. But this kind of patriotism was not strictly limited, for I found as much delight in the Swiss, French and Italian Alps, extending my "patriotism of the soil" far beyond the boundaries of the State in which I lived. I also liked beautiful Prague, Cracow and Spalato, which, though Austrian, were towns of the Czechs, Poles and Serbs. I love the German language, but English as well. English, French, Scandinavian and Russian literature has moulded and nourished my mind as much as German writing. European civilisation, with its wonderful national variations, was to me one beautiful jewel with many facets, and each one of them almost equally dear to me. I regarded the struggle of the suppressed nations for unity, liberty and autonomy as worthy of all the sympathy of Socialists; it appeared to me to be the sequel of the universal struggle for democracy. To no man am I more indebted for the understanding of the problem of nationality than to Otto Bauer and his books *Die Nationalitätenfrage* and *Der Balkankrieg*. But though he taught me to see the peculiarity in every nation and in the struggle for freedom and independence of the suppressed nations as part of the struggle for man's autonomy, nationality never struck me, any more than it did him, as an ideal wider than humanity; its principles were not sacrosanct. I rejected the claim that the nation in itself is the highest value and that other values must be subordinated to it. The primacy of mankind over national claims was self-evident to me.

This sentiment of "naïve cosmopolitanism" was fortified by my reading in history, which I approached perhaps with the same naïvety as the Rationalism and Humanitarianism of the French Enlightenment and the German Classics. However, I thought I had learned from history the relativity of patriotic values. In Thucydides' Greece as well as in Dante's Italy the nation-State was merely a city-State. The city-State was then, to apply Bosanquet's theory of the State to those communities, "the widest organisation which has the common experience necessary to found a common life".† For the citizens of Athens and Sparta the conception of a Hellenic community was as incon-

\* Anthony Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, etc. (first published in 1711), 1900, vol. II, pp. 244-9.

† Bernard Bosanquet, *The Philosophical Theory of the State*, 1899, p. 320.

ceivable as was the conception of an Italian community to the citizens of Florence and Pisa. They were all ardent patriots, though the object of their patriotism was only a fragment of a great community, a rather tiny place, inhabited by a splinter of the people who, though divided into separate States, were of common stock, language, religion and cultural tradition. And since hatred goes along with patriotism, so the patriots of Sparta hated the patriots of Athens just as heartily as the patriots of Pisa hated the patriots of Genoa. "As there is a natural loathing between men and serpents, dogs and wolves, horses and gryphons, so is there between Pisans and the Genoese, Pisans and the men of Lucca, Pisans and Florentines," records the chronicler Salimbene in 1284.

Among those Italian patriots there were a few "naïve cosmopolitanists"—Dante, for example—who realised the madness of discord and mutual hatred and preached (unavailing, of course) the unity of the human race or, at any rate, at least that of the Italians. But however deeply the patriotic men of those days might have regretted the prevailing state of affairs, to them it was the only conceivable one. To them, the city-State was "the widest organisation which has the common experience necessary to found a common life", the only "community of destiny", their "native land", their country. The feeling for the wider community even of the Italian nation, of which these city-States were parts, had not yet arisen, still less the feeling of the unity of humanity. In vain Dante exclaimed:

"Oh, race of mankind! What storms must toss thee, what losses must thou endure. What shipwrecks must buffet thee, a beast of many heads, striving after contrary things. Thou art sick in both thy faculties and understanding; thou art sick in thy affections. Unanswerable reasons fail to heal thy higher understanding; not even the sweetness of divine persuasion charms thy affections, when it breathes into thee through the music of the Holy Spirit: 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity'."

The Bosanquets of the fifth century B.C., as well as the Bosanquets of the fourteenth century A.D., repudiated, just as had the Bosanquets of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the ethical fact, and even the utility, of the conception of a common humanity.

This state of things led, naturally, as another historian recorded, to the mutual destruction of all of them: "Pisa destroys Amalfi; Genoa Pisa; Venice Genoa—with ruthless egotism—in the conflict of commercial interests. Florence enslaves Pisa, because she

needs a way to the sea. Sienna and Perugia, upon their inland altitudes, consume each other in brilliant but unavailing efforts to expand. Milan engulfs the lesser towns of Lombardy. Verona absorbs Padua and Treviso. Venice extends dominion over Friuli and the Veronese conquests. Strife and covetousness reign from the Alps to the Ionian Sea.”\*

Yet not merely North Italy, but the whole of Europe, was rent by bloody, continuous warfare at this period of history, when “several hundreds of thousands of little local sovereigns, as turbulent as they were brutal, served by rapacious agents who were both unscrupulous and ignorant, crushed the subject classes beneath an irritating tyranny which often was no better than a kind of regular brigandage.”†

For centuries the territory of France was divided among hundreds of petty local rulers, waging war against each other, invading the convoys of the merchants, devastating the crops of the peasants and plunging the people into disaster and pestilence. To the French of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, *la patrie* was not the whole of France, but the land of their local tyrant. Until the middle of the eighteenth century Englishmen and Scots slew each other, as was the custom from time immemorial, and the German tribes waged war against each other even as late as the nineteenth century. Even within England, the people of the various counties were so estranged from, and knew so little about each other, that “in 1830 a Sussex family could hardly be persuaded to seek its fortune in Staffordshire, or a Dorset family that Lancashire existed”.‡

How absurd, however, would an independent Norman Nation-State, separated from France, or an independent Scottish Nation-State, separated from England, appear to-day, or how remote would be the possibility of a war between Norman and French, or English and Scots, or even the absence of a common feeling between the people of all French provinces or between the people of all English counties, superseding their parochial sentiments!

But so did the division of Europe into twenty-seven independent States with the potential menace of war between them seem atavistic to me. The war of 1914 seemed to me a civil war without any sense or objective from the point of view of European civilisation.

The Scots rose time and time again against the English until 1745. Since then they have finally accepted the idea of a United Kingdom, and have slowly merged with the English and Welsh into

\* J. A. Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy*, vol. I, pp. 28-9.

† P. Boissonnade, *Life and Work in Mediaeval Europe*, p. 27.

‡ G. M. Young, *Victorian England—Portrait of an Age*, p. 101.

the British community. The members of each of those three nations have naturally retained an affection for their "native land"; but this sentiment of regional patriotism—the "patriotism of the soil"—is subordinated to the sentiment of British patriotism, for every Briton—whether English, Scottish or Welsh—feels somehow, in varying degrees, that his mind and being and, most of all, the manifold conditions of his life, have been shaped by the spiritual and historic processes of the British community, and by its economy, policy and laws, and that, conversely, his weal and woe and future are dependent on the weal and woe and future of the whole British community.

But surely the same circumstances, conditions and spiritual and historic processes, though less palpable, have also fused the European nations into a community with a common destiny. The nations of Europe were fashioned out of simple elements during the thousand years between the fall of the Roman Empire and that of its successor in the East, and reached their full measure of differentiation about 1500. In the course of another 300 years the modern national States emerged. But while politically estranged from each other in this process, at the same time capitalist expansion, modern technique and science intensively interlaced their economy, habits of life and mood of thought. "The people of various countries are swayed by identical interests, they are absorbed in the same problems, and thrilled with the same emotions," observed Lord Acton; he maintains that "the sum of differences in international character has been appreciably bound down by the constant process of adaptation and adjustment, and by the exposure to like influences".\*

This process of unification receives its impetus from the common spiritual heritage of the European nations. In one of his finest studies, *Der Historismus und seine Probleme*, the German sociologist Ernst Troeltsch points out that although "Mankind as a whole has no spiritual unity and therefore no uniform development", Europe has it: Europe, he emphasises, has been "welded by historic facts . . . into the closest connection with the civilisation of Greece, Rome and northern Europe". The spiritual threads of all the European nations are intrinsically interwoven in one single pattern. The art, music and literature, science and technology, philosophy, religion and political thought of every European nation have been (and still are) nourished by common intellectual sources and traditions, and have been merged in the course of sixty generations in one European tradition. Still more intense are the economic interrelations between the European peoples. Europe is the common spiritual country, no less than

\* Lord Acton, *Lectures on Modern History*, p. 33.

the common material country, of all the nations which dwell on its soil.

I felt that the natural evolution of the unity of Europe is, however, frustrated by the sovereignty of the European nation-States. The twenty-seven national sovereignties of the European States in the twentieth century appeared to me just as antiquated as the sovereignty of Pisa and Florence in the fourteenth, of Scotland and Normandy in the fifteenth, of the three-hundred-odd German States in the eighteenth, and of the remaining thirty-six German States in the nineteenth century. Just as the sovereignty of the small territorial dukedoms of past times was a source of anarchy and perpetual warfare, so the sovereignty of the European States of our time appeared to me a source of anarchy and perpetual warfare. And just as national sovereignty had superseded local sovereignty, so national sovereignty would have to be superseded by the sovereignty of a United Europe.

Thus the appeal of the ruling classes, in 1914, to the national sentiment of their people failed to evoke any response in my heart. Much as the Scot now feels more a member of the British community than of the Scottish, so I felt more a member of the European community than of the Austrian or German; and, being a Socialist, I felt that above all I was a member of the Socialist community which extends its devotion to all humanity.

It was the Marxian school of international Socialism which substantiated, and enhanced, my sentiment of "naïve cosmopolitanism". It contains a grandiose idea. It is based on the concept that national rivalries are inherent in the class-divided society; that the unity of mankind can be materialised only by the transformation of the capitalist order into the socialist; that this transformation can be effected only by the working class, because it alone is the disinherited class; and that by liberating itself, it liberates the whole human race from the misery caused by the disunity of mankind. The struggle for Socialism is thus bound up with the struggle for the unity of mankind.

This struggle reveals, further, the community of destiny, and the unity of purpose, of the working classes in every country. Everywhere the workers are subjected to capitalist exploitation; everywhere the workers have to fight for their emancipation in a class struggle against their own capitalist classes, which exploit the workers economically and dominate them politically.

Moreover, the standard of living of the workers in every country is affected by the standard of living of the workers in all countries. The standard of living of the German miners in the Ruhr valley determines to a certain extent the degree of employment and the wages of the British miners in South Wales; the conditions of life

of the Indian cotton-workers in Bombay have a bearing on the conditions of life of the British cotton-workers in Lancashire.

In domestic as well as in foreign affairs the interests of the working classes in every country are diametrically opposed to those of the ruling classes; conversely, the interests of the working classes of all countries are essentially the same. The same economic interests and the same political and moral aspirations point, therefore, to the need of working-class unity on an international scale.

It is certainly true that the prosperity of the State determines, to a degree, the prosperity of its working class. But the idea of seeking in the subjugation of foreign people a source of one's own prosperity is revolting to every Socialist. Although Britain derives considerable wealth from her colonial possessions, a wealth which benefits perhaps also the British working class, British Socialists always repudiated the imperialist policy of their country. Still less acceptable to Socialists is the notion of gaining *lebensraum* for their own nation at the expense of other nations. In his meditations on patriotism De Tocqueville distinguishes between patriotism of instinct and patriotism of reflection—the latter confounded with the personal interests of the citizens in the prosperity of their own country.\* This patriotism of selfishness and greed is the most repellant to Socialist thought and sentiment.

Socialists aim nationally at the classless society, and internationally at the "federation of the world". They therefore regard the struggle of the working class of one country as part of the common struggle of the working classes everywhere, and in the past they have supported each other in this fight with all their political, moral and financial resources.

Socialists evaluated every war from the point of view of how far its outcome might affect the progress of the international Socialist movement all over the world. In the Crimean War, Karl Marx wished for the defeat of Russia (though he hated Turkey) because he expected a weakening of the reactionary Czarist power in Europe from a Russian defeat. In the Austro-Italian War of 1859, Friedrich Engels wished for the defeat of Austria because he expected that it would accelerate the process of disintegration of the Hapsburg Empire and bring about Italian unity, and perhaps the unity of the Germans and German Austrians as well. In the Russo-Japanese War of 1904, all European Socialists (including the Russian) wished for the defeat of Russia (though they had no particular liking for feudal-theocratic Japan) because they expected that the defeat of Czarism might rekindle the Russian Revolution. The Socialists, when faced with war, were always

\* De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1875, vol. I, chap. xiv.

guided by the consideration of whether the defeat or the victory of a particular Power would improve or impede the conditions for the universal fight of the international working classes.

This was, broadly speaking, the prevailing sentiment among Austrian Socialists before the First World War. It was perhaps only a vague sentiment, perhaps even a delusion. It was, however, definitely my well-considered opinion.

I now found, during the war, that my opinion was regarded by many Socialists as obsolete, Coleridge once said that one "knows that patriotism is a necessary link in the golden chain of our affections and virtues, and turns away with indignant scorn from the false philosophy or mistaken religion, which would persuade him that cosmopolitanism is nobler than nationality, and the human race a sublimer object of love than a people". I adhered with all my heart to this "false philosophy", and I assumed that it was the philosophy of all Socialists. But I was now taught by Austrian, German, French and English Socialists, with almost the same words as Coleridge used, my patriotic duty. On the 4th of August, the German as well as the French Socialists voted for war credits and joined the ruling classes. All my feelings revolted against this decision. But I was told that they acted rightly and that I was wrong.

The whole tragedy of the situation was illuminated by Victor Adler in a truly pathetic speech at the beginning of the war. He explained the vote of the German Socialists. "My opinion is," he said, "that one had to vote for war credits. But I didn't know how to bring these words over my lips. It was a terrific decision; it is a terrific conflict, because the workers of the other countries are faced with the same trial. . . . There is only one thing which is worse than war, and that is defeat."

He confessed frankly that he did not care for Austria. "We have not much regard for this State," he said. But he was conscious of the great responsibility to the people who have to live in this State. "And even if the State should go to the devil, the people will have to remain there. We cannot wish Russia to march into our country." And he exclaimed despondently, "You can stand anything save a defeat and the desolations in the wake of a defeat!"

Then he sounded a new note. "In this war," he explained, "the destiny of the German people is at stake. And the interest of the German workers in Austria as well as in Germany cannot be differentiated from the interest of the German nation. We condemn the war," he said. "We curse those who began it; but since war is now a fact, we will fight it for our people." He also refused to investigate the problem of the repercussions of the outcome of the war on the universal Socialist revolutionary movement.

"To-day we are not faced with the question of the Russian Revolution, but with the question whether the Russian armies will march into Brünn, Budapest or Vienna. In such a situation I cannot investigate whether a Russian victory might be favourable for the fight of liberation of the Russian workers. If I feel the knife at my throat, I have, first of all, to push away the knife."\*

This was undoubtedly the instinctive reaction of most of the people involved in the war. Jules Guesde, the leader of the Marxian wing of French Socialism, justified his entry into the "Government of Sacred Union" with almost the same words as Victor Adler. "When the house is on fire it is no time for controversy," Guesde said. "The only thing to do is to lend a hand with the buckets." And a French trade-union leader remarked that if the Socialists had attempted to resist the mobilisation and the war, "the Paris workers . . . wouldn't have waited for the police, they would have shot us on the spot".†

Friedrich Stampfer, the editor of *Vorwärts*, expressed this mood, as far as the German workers were concerned, in the following sentence: "The justified wrath of the people would have swept away all those who dared to resist (the prosecution of the war). Hundreds of thousands of Social Democrats would never have understood or forgiven the Social Democratic members of the Reichstag had they voted against war credits."‡

It was true, and I knew it, that the Socialist International had recognised without question the right of every nationality to defend its liberty and its identity against conquest. "The independence of nations has in the International its supreme guarantee," stated Jean Jaurès.§ And, consistently, Jaurès, together with Vaillant, proposed a motion at the International Congress of 1907, proclaiming that every nation whose independence is threatened has "a claim to the assistance of the working classes of the whole world".

But the problem of self-defence of nations was overshadowed in all discussions of the International by the common fundamental opposition to all war and the means of its prevention. The International regarded the prevention of war as its foremost task from the time of its formation at Brussels in 1868. It was Karl Marx who in his Inaugural Address to the First International proclaimed it the duty of the working classes "to pierce the secrets of international policy, to keep an eye on the diplomatic actions

\* Victor Adler, *Aufsätze, Reden und Briefe*, vol. IX, pp. 106 ff.

† Both these statements are quoted by D. W. Brogan, *The Development of Modern France, 1870-1939*, p. 529.

‡ Friedrich Stampfer, *Sozialdemokratie und Kriegskredite*.

§ Jean Jaurès, *L'armée nouvelle*, p. 463.



of their governments, to counteract them, if possible, and if not, to forestall them by common action of denunciation, and to ensure that the common laws of morality and right which rule the relations between private persons shall become the supreme law ruling the relations between nations”.

But what were the means at the disposal of Socialists to enforce the “common laws of morality and right” as international laws and to prevent wars?

This problem had been discussed at nearly every international congress since 1868. At the first congress the general strike was recommended as the most effective action in counteracting war. But in 1868 in no country was the Socialist movement strong enough to command sufficient support from the working class for the proclamation of a general strike. The Congress of 1893 (at Zürich) made it the duty of the Socialists not only to fight “with all their means against the chauvinism of the ruling classes and to tighten the bonds of solidarity of the workers of all countries”, but also “to vote in the parliaments against the army estimates, and to work for disarmament”.

The idea of resistance to war by a general strike was upheld by a group of internationalists, of whom Gustave Hervé and Edouard Vaillant (in France), Keir Hardie (in England), Nieuwenhuis (in Holland), Henry de Man (in Belgium) and Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg (in Germany) were the most prominent representatives. Jaurès accepted the suggestion of a general strike only for the prevention of an aggressive war. If a country, which unprovoked is attacked, is entitled to the assistance of the working classes of all countries (including the aggressor country), it follows that if, say, Germany were to make a wanton attack on France, it is the duty of the German Socialists to impede the attacking force within its ranks and its rear by “every means in their power, from parliamentary actions and public agitation, up to a general strike and insurrection”; while, on the other hand, the French Socialists must aid the defending force with all their ardour and courage. Jaurès further suggested that in international disputes any State which refused to submit its case to some form of impartial arbitration was to be branded as an aggressive Power.

In the debate at the Congress of the International, held at Stuttgart (in 1907), the German Socialists did not share Jaurès’ opinion that it would always be the duty of the working class to assist its own Government if it were attacked. Karl Kautsky, for instance, pointed out that it certainly was not the duty of the Russian Socialists to defend the Czarist Government against Japan (in the war of 1904), though technically Japan was the

aggressor; should Kaiser Wilhelm's Germany become involved in war over Morocco, he added, it would not be the duty of the German Socialists to defend Germany, even if she were attacked. The Prussian official gazette thereupon announced "that the German Socialists are the least patriotic in the universe"—a sentence quoted repeatedly with pride in all German and Austrian Socialist papers.

The Congress then carried unanimously the following resolution (which was confirmed by the subsequent congresses at Copenhagen, 1910, and Basle, 1912):

"In the event of war being imminent, the working classes and their representatives in the countries concerned shall be bound, with the assistance of the International Socialist Bureau, to do all they can to prevent the breaking out of war, using for this purpose the means which appear to them most efficacious, and which must naturally vary according to the acuteness of the class struggle, and the general political conditions. In case war should break out notwithstanding, they should be bound to intervene for its speedy end and to employ all their forces for utilising the political and economic crisis created by the war, in order to rouse the masses of the people and to hasten the breakdown of the predominance of the capitalist class."

The resolution did not specify the means by which war might be prevented, though the German speakers in particular stressed in the debate the words "without excluding any".

The subsequent congresses of the International proceeded in the search for the means of preventing wars. Keir Hardie, supported by Edouard Vaillant, moved at the congress held in 1910 a resolution (which was carried), stating: "The Congress regards among the means which ought to be employed to avert war the general strike of the workers, mainly in the war industries, as the most suitable"; he also declared in moving this motion, "The workers are strong enough to prevent war. Carry into the trade unions the strongest possible propaganda against war. On the day of the proclamation of war, the workers must stop work." And even on the eve of the First World War, on July 16, 1914, the Paris Conference of the French Socialist Party carried a resolution, moved by Jaurès and Vaillant, again recommending a general strike, "organised simultaneously and on an international scale", as the most effective weapon to ward off the menace of war.

The French Marxian minority, led by Jules Guesde and Com-père-Morel, objected to this resolution on the ground that if it were to be carried out it would bring about the defeat of the

country with the best-organised working class, which kept most faithfully the decisions of the International, and it would turn out to the advantage of the country with the weakest working-class organisation.

In all the discussions among Socialists on the concrete means for the prevention of war two considerations prevailed. Firstly, that the International had not yet the power to prevent the *outbreak* of war, but, secondly, that the fear of revolutions might deter the governments from going to war. These two considerations recurred in many of Jaurès' speeches, and in almost every one of Victor Adler's on foreign affairs. "We know they (the governments) have bayonets, and cannons, and they are in a position to order mobilisation," Adler once said when Austria stood on the very verge of war in 1912. "We are defenceless. But it ought to be remembered that there is an iron law of the psychology of the people, a law, never proclaimed, but operative with automatic precision. It is the law that such a crime on the part of a Government will be avenged by a rising of the people against the Government which has committed the crime."\*

The Socialist leaders were convinced that with the increase of the Socialist movement the danger of war would diminish, owing merely to the potential threat of a revolution arising from a war; they were, however, harassed by anxieties that war might come before the Socialist movement was a formidable enough threat to the régime which unleashes war. The problem of the prevention of war was their most absorbing concern.†

From the policy of the International, as well as from the foreign policy of the Austrian and German Socialist parties, I (and perhaps most of the young Socialists) received the impression that if

\* Victor Adler, *ibid.*, vol. IX, pp. 67, 70.

† How embittered partisan sentiments might distort history is exemplified by Trotsky's *Memoirs*. He asserts that Otto Bauer had once mentioned to him (in 1909): "We in Austria don't make foreign policy". Trotsky comments on this remark as follows: "Now I became aware that these people (the Austrian Socialist leaders, in particular Otto Bauer) did not only not believe in revolution, but also not in war. Although they wrote in their First of May Day manifestoes on war and revolution . . . they were not aware that history had already lifted the gigantic soldier's boot over the ant-hill into which they had dug themselves absent-mindedly" (Leon Trotsky, *Mein Leben*, 1930, p. 203). One has only to look through Otto Bauer's *Nationalitätenfrage* and *Der Balkankrieg*, apart from his writings in *Der Kampf* through all the years up to the outbreak of war, to see how amazing is Trotsky's judgment. The truth is that Otto Bauer was the first Socialist writer who analysed and described concretely the national, social and economic forces making for war. In his *Nationalitätenfrage*, written in 1906, he predicted the outbreak of the world war, not in vague terms, but in its concrete forms as it actually emerged eight years later. For Victor Adler's foreign policy see the ninth volume of his *Aufsätze, Reden und Briefe*.

the Socialist International was not powerful enough to prevent the outbreak of war, the Socialists in every belligerent country would, if war should come, resist in one way or the other; and that this resistance would one day turn into a revolution. This impression was especially fortified by the last congress of the International held before the First World War.

This was the congress at Basle, in November 1912, preceded by a memorable meeting in the cathedral of the city. It was attended by a vast concourse of people from all parts of Switzerland, Alsace and Baden; they filled the beautiful church, glowing in the scarlet of a forest of flags, and the square before it. From the pulpit of the church spoke Keir Hardie and Jean Jaurès, Hugo Haase and Victor Adler, and none of the orators left any doubt that, if the rulers of the States should dare to unleash war, they would meet their doom.

"Unfortunately it does not depend on us Social Democrats whether there will be war or not," Victor Adler said. "Although the power of the working classes in all countries grows steadily, we don't overestimate it. But what we can do, and will do, is to stir up the workers, to make them conscious what a crime war is, so that should this crime really be committed by the rulers, we hope that it will automatically bring about their end."

Then followed a cry, piercing the hearts of the multitude. "Are the common people, are the workers still merely mute sheep who let themselves be driven to the slaughter-house?"

And in deep resignation Adler added: "We don't know. But what we do know for certain is that if this atrocity against humanity should be perpetrated, the hour will come when the workers will use not only their voices to accuse and to indict the guilty, but also their swords to execute their sentence against the guilty."\*

In the quietness of my life at the front during the first months of the war—near Cracow, where we were standing by, expecting an onslaught by the rapidly advancing Russians—I thought of all the speeches of the leaders of the International. I had not forgotten a single word. How often had I quoted them in articles and lectures, how enthusiastically had I elucidated them, how profound was my belief in them! Now this belief was shattered.

There was no one among the hundred men of my unit with whom I could talk these things over. Most of them were young Viennese workers and clerks, and some were country people from the vicinity of the town. They did not seem contaminated by war hysteria or inspired by war enthusiasm; but they accepted the fact of war without many scruples. I did not discover in their

\* Victor Adler, *ibid.*, vol. IX, pp. 77 f.

mood the faintest trace of Austrian patriotism or German nationalism; but in their eyes the Serbs were, of course, rascals, and they agreed that the Russians must be stopped. The political and moral problems involved in the war apparently occupied an extremely small part of their minds.

Once I had a talk with one of my mates in the battery, a cheerful, good-natured and quiet, intelligent fellow of my own age. I asked him why he called the Serbs rascals.

"Why? Because they are; that's just that," he answered.

"Come on," I said; "that is no answer. Have you ever seen a Serb and spoken to him?"

"No, and I'm not keen on meeting any of them. Didn't they cause all the trouble in the world, including the war?"

"Remember, we started the war, not the Serbs. It was the Austrian Government that declared war on the Serbs," I replied.

"Yes, but only because they murdered Franz Ferdinand," he said.

"But the assassin was an Austrian, not a Serb. True, he was of Serb nationality, but we have tens of thousands of Serbs in our country."

"All the same," he insisted, "they are rascals. And for God's sake drop the subject. I'm not interested in knowing why there is a war on. Let's see what we've got for supper."

"All right. But isn't it horrible to think that thousands of Serbs and Austrians and Russians and Germans, and perhaps you yourself, are going to die in a war of which you don't know the cause?" I asked him.

"Don't be a bore," he answered. "You know that we have to fight because we don't want the Russians in our country; the same as the Germans. That's why there is war," he explained.

"But we marched into Serbia and the Germans marched into Belgium before the Russians marched into Galicia," I replied.

"Stop talking nonsense," he exclaimed, with an undertone of anger, apparently because I had started talking about matters on which he, subconsciously, did not want to reflect: and getting up abruptly from the ground where we were lying, he went off, adding, "You know it had to be."

It made a deep impression upon me to see how most people without questioning accepted the calamity of the war as inevitable. "You know it had to be," my friend said, and he repeated only what most of the people said. That war might not be an upheaval of nature, like an earthquake, but an act of human volition, was scarcely discussed. The common people have been

accustomed to trust and obey authority; so they did not question its wisdom in the hour of crisis. It is true, as the historians of nearly every school confirmed after the event, that "in all countries the nations believed that their rulers were the victims of aggression or plots".\* At any rate, when once the machinery of war was set in motion and one was caught by it, there was no escape from it. "Better not to think!" Moreover, in a great human calamity man is lost in the crowd, and the crowd feels rather than thinks. It is the common feeling of fear of something terrific and unknown in the wake of defeat which prompts the community to act as one man in war. Fear and danger breed credulity and, still worse, blunt the sense of compassion for human sufferings.

My comrades in the unit always used to talk about the war in high spirits, as if it were an extended picnic. We had not yet fired a shot; we had not yet seen the real face of war. We had learned that about sixty miles away from our position a formidable battle was proceeding, and that the Russians had annihilated whole Austrian regiments; we had heard that in the swamps at Tannenberg 100,000 Russians were drowned, and that in Serbia and in France tens of thousands of people had already been killed or maimed. This most appalling human catastrophe was, however, discussed merely in terms of military operations and in a mood as if they were discussing last Sunday's football match. When they said, "They lost twelve thousand men", they might just as well have been saying, "They lost by three goals". The human side of the "game" apparently never entered their thoughts.

This mood did not even change when we were right in the war. In the middle of November, 1914, the Russians approached Cracow, and I saw a battlefield for the first time in my life. I had been transferred to a 30.5-cm. mortar battery, and was therefore pretty far behind the trenches. What astonished me most was the strange contrast between the roaring guns and the seeming emptiness of the battlefield. The villages and lonely cottages amidst the fields east of Cracow were in ruins, and not a single living being was to be seen in this gloomy desert.

One day our field-telephone communication with the observer in the first line was cut, and I had to go with another fellow to repair it. We must have lost our way, for we passed the front line without being aware of it and stumbled through No Man's Land. Approaching a hut, we suddenly stood face to face with a Russian soldier, lying on the ground against the wall of the hut. He was dead. He must have been killed some days before, for his face was already a little bloated and tinged a

\* D. W. Brogan, *ibid.*, p. 459.

dark blue. He stared at us and at the strange world with wide-open eyes.

He was the first "enemy" I had met in this war. But every nerve of my being revolted against the suggestion of seeing in this pitiable figure my "enemy". He was probably a peasant or a workman, as his heavy hands, with which he still gripped the rifle, indicated—one of those who had to labour hard all their lives for a little food, and love, and the sun, and the song of the birds. Now there was no more love and sun and birds for him; he was shot by one of his kind, by one of his "brothers in Christ", perhaps even by one of his comrades of the Socialist brotherhood.

"How ghastly he looks," remarked my mate and turned away. "War is a horrible thing," he added later on, when he noticed that I was distressed by this sight.

My comrade had good reason to avoid agonising reflections on the human woes of war, for he himself had to face the same doom as our dead "enemy". But it was most nauseating to observe the same mood in the "patriots" at home, the "Vendurius", so trenchantly analysed by Marcel Proust (in his *Past Recaptured*). They were, of course, loudest in their claim to genuine patriotism. "It might be said that the Vendurius thought of it [the war], because they had a political salon where every evening the situation of the armies and the navies was discussed. They did, indeed, give thought to the hecatombs of regiments annihilated and of passengers drowned; but some inverted mental process multiplies everything that touches our well-being to such a degree, and divides by such enormous figures everything that does not concern ourselves, that the death of millions of unknown men touches us almost less unpleasantly than does a draught of air."

I was soon to meet the "Vendurius" of Vienna. After the battle of Cracow, which was terminated in the middle of December with the retreat of the Russians beyond the river Dunajetz, our battery moved into the Carpathians. There I caught scarlet fever and was transported to an epidemic hospital in Budapest. After I had recovered I was sent from there to the cadre of my regiment in Vienna.

I found the city seething with life, and most people (except those who had relatives at the front) appeared to be in a most sanguine frame of mind; at any rate the crowds which filled the coffee-houses. There were the aesthetes who still discussed with trembling voices the beauty of the Emperor's War Manifesto and the overpowering simplicity of the High Commander's *communiqués*; there were the cynics who mocked the Manifesto and the *communiqués* and joked about battles in which tens of thousands had perished; there were the philosophers who, with majestic

self-complacency, expounded the theory that the French and the English had outlived their time and that the age of the "young nations" had commenced; there were the faithful who, from a pious love of the old man in Château Schoenbrunn, were prepared to sacrifice the lives of everyone, except their own and those of their sons. And there were, of course, the unsentimental ones. One of them, munching a piece of chocolate cake, shouted at me with an expression of utter delight, "Did you hear? Up to the brim! Up to the brim the trenches were filled with Russians!" he cried and pushed a paper towards me. What had brought on his exultation was a report of the fighting near Lodz; this was what the report said: "The deserted Russian trenches were literally filled with dead. Never before during the whole fighting of our Eastern Army have our troops seen so many Russian corpses. On a hill no less than 887 dead Russians were found." The admirer of this harvest of death was not for a moment concerned that these 887 dead Russians and the thousands of those who filled the trenches were sons of mothers and fathers of children. For him they were "enemies", because he was a patriot.

I had nothing in common with them. I went to see some friends of my former district group. We discussed the war policy of the Austrian and German Socialists. Some of them had attended the conference at which Victor Adler had defended the attitude of the Party. All of them had been shocked by the article in the *Arbeiter Zeitung* in which the vote of the German Social Democrats was enthusiastically greeted. They showed me the text of the statement, read by the Socialists in the Reichstag on August 4, and I learned that the German Social Democrats had not been carried away by any war hysteria; they simply stated that since the German people were involved in war, the Socialists would not desert them. And most of my comrades thought that they had to act in that way.

I went to see my friends on the *Arbeiter Zeitung*. When I opened the door of Austerlitz's room and noticed that Victor Adler was there, I wanted to withdraw. But Adler called me and welcomed me kindly, eager to learn what I had experienced at the front. I told him what I had seen, and then begged him to explain the question which had tormented my conscience since August 4.

Victor Adler looked pensively at me for a while, and then said: "You have not yet finished your narration about your war experiences. Tell me what sort of a job you are actually doing."

When I gave him a summary of the work of the gun crew, he insisted on a detailed description of the work I personally had to perform. A little surprised, I told him all about it, and he listened with the utmost attention.



"It seems you are doing your job quite well," he then said, and a glimmer of derision sparkled in his eyes. "Now, go on with your job at the front and let me do my job at home."

I stared at him, gasping, and deeply hurt. Austerlitz, seeing my bewilderment, started talking about this and that, and Adler joined in. When I took leave, Adler pressed my hand and said with an almost tender warmth in his voice, "Good-luck, Braunthal, and believe me, matters are more complicated than they may appear to you."

Two days later I left for the front, sick at heart, aimless, without hope and faith. I was not to see Vienna again for more than a year and a half.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### THE DUCK AND THE TROUT

*O'Flaherty:* Mother says all the English generals is Irish. She says all the English poets and great men was Irish. She says the English never knew how to read their own books until we taught them. She says we're the lost tribes of the house of Israel and the chosen people of God. She says that the goddess Venus, that was born out of the foam of the sea, came up out the water in Killiney Bay off Bray Head. She says that Moses built the seven churches, and that Lazarus was buried in Glasnevin.

*Sir Pearce:* Bosh! How does she know he was? Did you ever ask her?

*O'Flaherty:* I did, sir, often.

*Sir Pearce:* And what did she say?

*O'Flaherty:* She asked me how did I know he wasn't, and fetched me a chant on the side of my head.

*Sir Pearce* (exhausted): Well, I give it up. The woman is—Oh, well! No matter.

*O'Flaherty* (sympathetically): Yes sir: she's pigheaded and obstinate; there is no doubt about it. She's like the English; they think there is no one like themselves. It's the same with the Germans, though they are educated and ought to know better. You'll never have a quiet world till you knock the patriotism out of the human race.—Bernard Shaw, *O'Flaherty, V.C.*

WHEN I looked down from the top of the forty- or fifty-foot factory chimney where I was occupying a tiny nest as an observer of Colonel Janitzka's artillery group, I saw first about a dozen yards to the east our own trenches dug into the embankment of the river Dunajetz, then the shallow river, hardly more than thirty yards wide, and then its opposite bank, on which the Russians had entrenched themselves. The Austrian and Russian soldiers were so close that they could literally see the whites of each other's eyes and talk to each other. But none of them dared

raise his head over the crest of the ditch, because he would have been immediately fired on by his opposite number. So the mute trenches lay in the spring sun apparently deserted and dead as the flat plains that stretched beyond the Russian trenches almost as far as the eye could see.

A little more than six miles farther east the small Polish town of Tarnow rose from the plains, and with my telescope I could clearly see the movement of the railway trains and even count their trucks. As observer planes were then scarcely in use, it was my duty to direct the fire of our long-range batteries against these targets in motion.

I performed this job with little more than half my attention. I always had some interesting books with me, and then my heart was really not in the struggle, which appeared to me utterly senseless and brutal.

In the brilliant spring weeks of 1915 there was not much shooting in our sector of the front. We were preparing a great-assault on the Russians, as I gathered from the massing of artillery; but a divine quietness still reigned over the monotonous plain. It appeared as though our men as well as the Russians had become tired of shooting at each other for no understandable purpose. There was almost no rifle-fire; only our artillery occupied itself from time to time firing on particular targets, to which the Russian artillery promptly replied. Sometimes Russian guns seemed to aim at my chimney, which they certainly had recognised as an observation point. Still, I felt pretty secure on my lofty seat. Though one or two hits had broken away a brick here and there, I knew that only a chance direct hit could cause the chimney to collapse.

So, from dawn till dusk, in a four-hour shift, I enjoyed the repose of my aerial study almost without disturbance. I did a little reading and writing, a little observation, but most of the time I thought and dreamed with my eyes open.

I always meditated the same very simple, perhaps childlike query: why had millions of people, who did not know each other, who had done no wrong to each other, travelled hundreds, even thousands of miles from all corners of the globe to kill and maim and torture each other?

Most of them apparently believed what they had been told by their governments and their Press long before the war began—that they were surrounded by enemies who desired to enslave them. The Austrians had been told that “the Serbs” wanted to destroy the Monarchy and that “the Russians” wanted to establish domination over this corner of Europe; the Germans had been told that “the English” intended to “encircle” and strangle

Germany; the French and English had been told that "the Germans" were striving for the subjugation of Europe.

But all these assertions were clearly untrue as far as "the Serbs", or "the Russians", or "the Austrians", or "the French and Germans" were concerned. The common people of no country had any wish to destroy any other people's country or to enslave foreign nations. Yet almost every one of them believed their lives and freedom were threatened by the others, and, because they firmly believed it, they willingly obeyed the order to join their troops and to travel hundreds of miles to kill and maim their "enemies".

I had only to talk to our own men in the ditches, who were facing the Russians beyond the river, to have this impression confirmed. There were among them young peasants from the Alpine valleys of the Tyrol and the plains of Hungary, and there were industrial workers from Moravia, Styria and Vienna. Most of them had left their birthplaces for the first time in their lives, and had never before seen a Russian. Nothing was remoter from their minds than the idea of conquest or of enslaving other people. Not one of them expected any benefit from the outcome of the war for himself or for his family. Yet almost every one of them believed that "the Russians" were bent on enslaving his country and that it was his patriotic duty to defend the freedom of his people against foreign domination.

I got the same impression from a Russian soldier captured one night when he went down to the river to wash his laundry. He was, as he said when interrogated, a peasant from a village near Kasan. He surely had never dreamt of going out on the road of conquest. In fact, the first time he had heard of a country called Austria was when he was told that the Germans and Austrians were threatening his country; this he seemed to believe, and so he thought it his patriotic duty to defend his imperilled fatherland.

It was true that the rulers of every Great Power harboured imperialist designs. It was true that the rulers of Austria aimed at the subjugation of Serbia and ascendancy over the Balkans; it was true that the rulers of Russia aimed at the conquest of Constantinople and also at domination in the Balkans; it was further true that the rulers of Germany aimed at hegemony on the European continent and at an increase of their colonial empire; and it was, above all, true that the rulers of France aimed at revenge for Sedan and the reconquest of Alsace-Lorraine.

But the common people did not share the imperialist aspirations of their rulers; they did not even know of them. Nor did they know that they were entrapped in international commitments which their rulers, in the furthering of their designs, had concluded.

France, for example, concluded an alliance with Russia in order to regain her provinces lost in 1871. But as time passed, and as the passion for revenge faded, most Frenchmen gave up the idea of waging war for the "redemption" of Alsace-Lorraine; they would have preferred an understanding with Germany. For France, the Franco-Russian alliance had lost its original purpose. But the alliance was a fact, cemented with about £450 million of French loans. Big French vested interests were now staked in Czarist Russia's power position. France was thus entangled in the net of an alliance which was concluded in circumstances which had in the meantime changed, but which had become a vested interest of a dominating group of French society. Thus the conflict between Austrian and Russian imperialism, springing from the contest for the ascendancy over the Balkans, set in operation the Franco-Russian alliance and engulfed the French people in a war which they had not willed.

Far more striking was the case of the German imperialists. While the misgivings among the French people that France's security might be menaced by imperialist Germany, so enormously superior to her in population and industrial resources, was not quite unjustified, the assertion of the German imperialists that Germany's security was endangered by England was entirely unfounded. The German imperialists used this pretext for the increase of their military power as a means to "extract valuable concessions from England by offensive blunder and persistent nagging".\* The most effective instrument for this policy of "offensive blunder" was a strong navy. In order to obtain the consent of German public opinion to the increase of the navy, the German Government scared the German people with the ghost of a sudden English attack on German lands. Prince von Bülow, then Reich Chancellor, in a note to the *Auswärtige Amt* on October 8, 1905, suggested that "the Admiralty be consulted on the question whether the allegation that England had been prepared to seize the Kiel Canal and to occupy Schleswig-Holstein might not afford a useful argument for increasing the navy". Prince von Bülow knew perfectly well that this allegation was as fantastic as it was absolutely untrue; he was well aware that Britain had no aggressive aims whatever towards Germany. Yet he deliberately engineered a war scare as "a useful argument for increasing the navy". On October 12, 1905, in an outline of policy, he stated: "In view of all future contingencies, it is essential that the German nation shall form the conviction that our policy has been loyal and peaceable, but that we run the

\* Memorandum by Sir Eyre Crowe, January 1, 1907, published by Gooch and Temperley, *British Documents on the Origins of the War*, vol. III, p. 416.

risk of a sudden and unforeseen attack unless we are powerful at sea as well as on land. This . . . must be the keynote of a number of articles in the daily Press." And three days later he wrote: "It is all the more important to create the impression . . . particularly among the German public, that it was the intention of England to incite the French . . . and thus bring about a world war".\*

Conversely, the English nationalists, though they knew that Kaiser Wilhelm's naval policy was but an "offensive blunder", pretended to take it seriously and exploited it as a "useful argument for increasing the navy" as well as for emphasising the need of a conscript army, as propagated by Field-Marshal Earl Roberts' and Lord Curzon's National Service League (the British counterpart of the German Admiral von Tirpitz' Flottenverein). How the English imperialists, nationalists and militarists in turn scared their people is recorded by Professor Hobhouse. "Those who the other day were loudest in proclaiming their nation the appointed rulers of mankind are now in panic because our neighbour wants to have one warship to our two," he observed. "The same Press influences which so misled the nation in the matter of South Africa can proceed, seemingly, with undiminished influence to work up a scare on the subject of Germany. The methods used are substantially the same, except that the appeal is no longer to vainglory or vindictiveness, but to fear." † After Edward VII's visit to France in 1904, which paved the way for the Anglo-French *Entente Cordiale*, there were complaints in Germany, recorded J. A. Farrer, "that *The Times* had never been more poisonously anti-German, and that the *National Review* was as bad; if these papers represent the real mind of the British Government and public, Germany might look any night for an attack by combined squadrons of England. On our side similar fears were cherished, and thus from mutual provocation arose mutual fear, producing a mental atmosphere in which no real friendliness could take root or flourish." ‡

There were people who endeavoured to quell the contagion of the war scare. Asquith called the menace of a sudden German invasion of the English shores in time of peace "a chimerical danger which with the authority of Lord Roberts alarmed the public imagination. . . . We know that such a foolhardy adventure—the so-called 'bolt from the blue'—was never seriously contemplated by Admiral von Tirpitz and the acute minds of the

\* Quoted by Hermann Kantorowitz, *The Spirit of British Policy and the Myth of the Encirclement of Germany*, p. 450.

† L. T. Hobhouse, *Democracy and Reaction*, p. 53.

‡ J. A. Farrer, *England under Edward VII*, p. 104.

£ (Millennium)

General Staff.”\* But Herbert Asquith and the men of his mind did not prevail. “For years the big English newspapers incessantly speak of Germany’s aggressive intentions. It must be concluded that the theme pleases their readers, as they continue to discuss it in spite of all probabilities.”†

The same spectacle of mass deception was displayed during the Delcassé crisis in 1905. All of a sudden the German nationalist Press indulged in a vehement attack of Gallophobia and launched forth insulting ultimatums to France, creating the provocative mood which precedes war. The insolence of German chauvinism provoked an outburst of French nationalism. “France,” Romain Rolland records, “was shaken from top to bottom : and even the most diffident of the French roared with anger.” But, Romain Rolland adds, “The great mass of the German people had nothing at all to do with the provocation : they were shocked by it : the honest men of every country ask only to be allowed to live in peace : and the people of Germany are particularly peaceful, affectionate, and anxious to be on good terms with everybody, and much more inclined to admire and emulate other nations than to go to war with them. But the honest men of a nation are not asked for their opinion.”‡

Thus the Germans were told that the English, together with the French and the Russians, had staged a plot to annihilate Germany. And the English people were told that the Germans were preparing a sudden attack on England to rob her of her colonies. All of them were deceived. “Each government accuses the other of perfidy, intrigue and ambition, as a means of heating the imagination of their respective nations, and incensing them to hostilities,” observed Tom Paine a hundred and fifty years ago.§ The common people of all countries were thus trapped in a labyrinth of fear, suspicion, prejudice and hatred. It is, in the first place, the mutual fear of being suddenly attacked and subjugated by a neighbouring State which inverts patriotism and transforms the love of one’s own nation into the hatred of other nations. It makes them easily the prey of an atavist philosophy which preaches the moral and intellectual superiority of their own people and hatred and contempt of the others. For they hated, too, out of a feeling of their own superiority and a contempt for the inferiority of the others without knowing that these feelings were instilled by a systematic propaganda. Those who succumbed to this propaganda were merely the dupes of an order of property which in the scramble for the wealth of the earth involves the nations in mutual hatred and war.

\* Herbert Asquith, *The Genesis of the War*, p. 59.

† Report of the Belgian Foreign Office, June 3, 1907.

‡ Romain Rolland, *John Christopher*, vol. III, p. 442.

§ Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*, H. B. Bonner’s edition, p. 116.

Irresponsible journalists, money-makers, militarists, professors, war-mongers, bishops and sinister politicians persuaded the people of one country to despise the people of another country, on the grounds of their contemptible "national character". But, if there is a "national character", it is a feature which would alter only in the course of generations. Yet it could frequently be observed that people of a particular country, despised by people of another country as "bullies" yesterday, were respected by the same people as a most gentle race next day, and *vice versa*; at any rate, it could be observed that people were frequently persuaded to entertain friendly feelings towards people whom they were taught to hate only the other day, or to despise people to-day whom they had admired yesterday. It is quite clear that this sudden change in the national sentiments of love and hatred towards other people were not produced by a sudden change in their "national character", but by a change in the expediency of policy.

As the Austrians were now involved in a war against the Russians, the Austrian papers worked hard to persuade their readers that they must see in the Russians a covetous race. Karl Leuthner, foreign editor of the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, published a book (*Der russische Volksimperialismus*) in which he developed an ingenious theory to prove that Russian imperialism was a particular kind of imperialism; it was not an imperialism of the ruling classes—like German imperialism, for instance—but an imperialism of the Russian people themselves—a truly popular imperialism. It was, he asserted, the very nature of the Russian country, its limitless steppes and its boundless spaces, which inspired the mushik as well as the grand-duke with the irresistible desire to conquer limitless lands.

When I read Leuthner's book at the front, I remembered the peasant our men had captured as he washed his laundry in the river; he was a giant in stature, with blue, laughing, kindly eyes. I wondered whether he had really left his village near Kazan to conquer Austria because he could not resist the inner urge to "collect lands".

And when I looked down from the height of the chimney towards the Russian trenches, manned by my "enemies", I recalled my father's story of how the Austrian patriots had lined the street and had cheered the Russians, sent by the Czar to aid his colleague on the Austrian throne, when they rode through Brody. Then the Austrian patriot had to love, or at any rate to respect, the Russians and to regard them as friends. But since the conclusion of the Austro-German alliance (in 1879) on the one side, and the Franco-Russian alliance (in 1891) on the other, there was

no longer any need to cherish tender feelings for the Russians; they were now considered potential enemies (with the status of moral inferiority attached to potential or actual enemies). The big annual war manoeuvres of the Austrian army were performed in Galicia under the nose of the Russians. And when, in the war of 1914, both these alliances became operative, the potential enemy became an actual enemy and had to be treated accordingly; not only to be killed and maimed, but also to be dishonoured.

Still more revealing was the change in national sentiments of the good Austrian patriots towards "the Prussians". For more than a hundred years, from the times of the Empress Maria Theresia until the conclusion of the Austro-German alliance in 1879, Prussia was officially regarded as "the inveterate enemy" of Austria. Until then "the Prussians" were depicted by Austrian patriots as an innately brutish, rapacious and detestable people. Only nine years before the conclusion of this alliance, the Austrian Government planned a common war with Napoleon III against Prussia, aimed at crushing her power to dust. The negotiations went to such lengths that in March 1870 the Archduke Albert of Austria, hero of Custoza, was sent by the Emperor Francis Joseph to France to arrange the military side of the war pact, and at the end of April Napoleon III told his aide-de-camp, General Le Brun, that the Archduke and himself had drawn up a common plan of campaign. Shortly after, General Le Brun was sent by Napoleon to Vienna to arrange for the co-operation of the Austrian military authorities, and on June 23 he returned to Paris to submit Austria's definite plan of campaign to Napoleon, fixing the commencement of the war at the middle of March 1871.\*

However, it happened that in the meantime Bismarck and Moltke, on their side, had prepared a campaign against France and before the Franco-Austrian plan was adopted the Franco-Prussian War broke out. In view of the swift Prussian victory, the Austrian Government found it discreet to stay on the sidelines. A few years later the same Austrian Emperor who had plotted a wanton act of aggression with France against Prussia concluded with the King of Prussia (who had also become the German Kaiser) a most cordial alliance primarily directed against France. From about this moment on "the Prussians" apparently ceased to be brutish and detestable; they were to be respected by the Austrian patriots as hard-working, honest, sober people, with great ideals, whereas the French were to be despised as the trouble-makers of Europe.

But had Bismarck laid the trap into which Napoleon plunged

\* Cf. J. Holland Rose, *The Development of the European Nations*, p. 34 ff.



a little less skilfully, and had the Franco-Austrian war pact become operative in good time, and had Prussia been defeated, then the Austrian patriot would have continued to regard "the Prussians" as bullies.

France's defeat at Sedan in 1870 produced a profound change in the French sentiments of hatred, love and respect. Until 1870 the English were regarded as the traditional enemies of France; the French summed up the English in the one word "perfidious". For the Russians the French had utter contempt, fortified by the Crimean War, in which France had fought on the side of Britain and Turkey against Russia; every fibre of the people of the Grand Revolution revolted against the barbaric despotism of the Czarist régime over the millions of illiterate, superstitious and wretched serfs, and when, in 1863, the Poles rose against Czarism, the burning sympathies of the French nation sided with them. For the German people the French harboured neither particular love nor particular animosity, for Germany was still divided into many independent principalities, and therefore constituted no danger to France. Napoleon III encouraged Bismarck in his war against Denmark, he urged Bismarck to annex Schleswig-Holstein, he even negotiated a pact with Prussia before the outbreak of Bismarck's war against Austria in 1866, and he remained neutral in that war.

But now the proud arms of France, which had been victorious in the Crimea, in Italy and in Africa, were defeated at Sedan. France, by far the wealthiest, and generally regarded as being the strongest, Power on the Continent, was now deeply humiliated.

The French people immediately recognised the man who was responsible for this disaster; they overthrew Napoleon. But the same people who had supported Napoleon's régime of "national glory", who had boasted of the position which France occupied as the arbiter of Europe, and who had to share the responsibility for the war, which Napoleon had unleashed, and for the defeat, which France had suffered, staged a campaign of hatred of the Germans in preparation for a war of revenge against Germany. The Germans were now branded as Enemy No. 1 (superseding the English in the order of French national hatred), and after the conclusion of the Franco-Russian alliance the French patriots suddenly discovered that the Russians were a most amiable people and that no fault could be detected in the Czarist system which slew Poles and Jews and tortured men who proclaimed the principles of 1789, inscribed on every public building in France.

This sentiment was most impressively unfolded before the eyes of a wondering world when, in 1893, the Russian Fleet paid a visit of honour to Toulon, in return for a visit which the French Fleet

had paid to Kronstadt. The enthusiasm of the French nation was so delirious that many people were crushed to death when a large crowd rushed forward to the quay to embrace and kiss their "brothers in arms". The new alliance roused such tender feelings among the French patriots that "one correspondent wrote that he had been informed at a Ball that there was scarcely a woman in Paris who would not have been ready to satisfy the desire of any of the Russian sailors. . . . One woman, having put on a dress composed of the colours of the French and Russian flags, stood on a bridge awaiting the arrival of the Russian sailors and threw herself into the river and was drowned. . . ." And the Bishop of Toulon, at the launching of a battleship on this solemn occasion, said in his sermon, "What its destination may be, God only knows. Will it vomit death from its dreadful bowels? We do not know. But if, having to-day pleaded with the God of Peace, we may hereafter have to call upon the God of War, we may be sure that it will advance against the foe in the ranks with the most powerful (Russian) men-of-war whose crews have to-day entered into so near a fraternal union with us." \*

French sympathies for the Russian people lasted, however, only as long as the Franco-Russian alliance endured. When, in November 1917, the Russian people rose against Czarism and capitalism, annulled the French loans and severed the alliance, the French patriots became aware of a sudden metamorphosis of the Russian national character, for now they called the Russians a rabble of criminal barbarians. The same French patriots who had revelled in the fraternal union with the Russians sent the same battleship which was launched at Toulon in honour of the Russian Fleet into the Black Sea to sink the Russian Fleet. The French sentiment towards the Russians changed once more when the Russians were so powerfully instrumental in the liberation of Europe from Hitler; the "barbarians" of yesterday became once more the flower of humanity of to-day.

Similar were the changes in English sentiment towards the French and the Germans. From the time of the Hundred Years' War until the conclusion of the *Entente Cordiale* in 1907, the French were regarded by the English as their "insidious enemies" who had to be treated according to Nelson's glib advice: "Fear God, honour the King, and hate a Frenchman as you do the devil". It is true that this furious hatred of the French was dropped a notch to mere contempt after France's defeats at Waterloo and Sedan. On the other hand, from the times of Frederic II the

\* The story of the visit of the Russian Fleet to Toulon is published together with contemporary documents by Leo Tolstoi, *Patriotism and Christianity*, 1896, p. 9 ff.

sympathies of the English went to Germany. Although George II regarded Frederic, justly I think, as a "mischievous rascal, a bad friend, a bad ally, a bad relation, and a bad neighbour, in fact, the most dangerous and ill-disposed prince in Europe",\* William Pitt, who had to fight France in North America and India and who, therefore, welcomed the rise of Prussia as a most desirable counter-weight against French supremacy, cheered Frederic as the champion of the liberties of Europe and the pillar of the Protestant faith. Frederic's victory at Rossbach was duly celebrated at the Tabernacle in London by Whitefield as a crowning victory for the Protestant cause.

Faithful to these sentiments, English public opinion sided during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 with Germany against France. Carlyle carefully distinguished between the "noble, patient, deep, pious and solid Germany" and the "vapouring, vain-glorious, gesticulating, quarrelsome, restless and over-sensitive France". Granville reported to Queen Victoria that it was "evident that the sentiment of the House on both sides generally condemns the conduct of France".† The wave of English hate and contempt of the French people, and the English enthusiasm for the Germans, rose to such dizzy heights after Sedan and the proclamation of the Paris Commune that *The Times*, venting this sentiment, could state on December 10, 1870, in a remarkable leader:

"We must say with all frankness that France has never shown herself so senseless, so pitiful, so worthy of contempt and reprobation, as at the present moment when she obstinately declines to look facts in the face, and refuses to accept the misfortune her own conduct has brought upon her.

"A France, broken up in utter anarchy, Ministers who have no recognised chief, who rise from the dust in their air balloons, and who carry with them for ballast shameful and manifest lies and proclamations of victories that exist only in their imagination, a Government which is sustained by lies and imposture, and chooses rather to continue and increase the waste of lives than to resign its own dictatorship and its wonderful Utopia of a republic: that is the spectacle which France presents to-day.

"It is hard to say whether any nation ever before burdened itself with such a load of shame. The quantity of lies which France officially and unofficially has been manufacturing for us in full knowledge that they are lies, is something frightful and absolutely unprecedented.

"Perhaps it is not much after all in comparison with the

\* Quoted by H. A. L. Fisher, *A History of Europe*, p. 758.

† Quoted by R. W. Seton-Watson, *Britain in Europe, 1789-1914*, p. 495.

immeasurable heaps of delusions and unconscious lies which have so long been in circulation among the French. Their men of genius who are recognised as such in all departments of literature are apparently of opinion that France outshines other nations in a superhuman wisdom, that she is the new Zion of the whole world, and that the literary production of the French for the last fifty years, however insipid, unhealthy, and often devilish, contains a real gospel rich in blessing for all the children of men.

"We believe that Bismarck will take as much of Alsace-Lorraine, too, as he chooses, and that it will be the better for him, the better for us, the better for all the world but France, and the better in the long run for France herself.

"Through large and quiet measures, Count von Bismarck is aiming with eminent ability at a single object: the well-being of Germany and of the world, of the large-hearted, peace-loving, enlightened, and honest people of Germany growing into one nation; and if Germany becomes the mistress of the Continent in place of France, which is light-hearted, ambitious, quarrelsome, and over-excitabile, it will be the most momentous event of the present day, and all the world must hope that it will soon come about." \*

The feeling against the French and in favour of the Germans, as manifested in *The Times*, was so strong in Britain that when Gladstone, shocked by the brutal annexation of Alsace-Lorraine without regard to the wishes of its population, desired to organise a protest of the neutral Powers against this arbitrary act, he found himself without the support of any of his colleagues in the Cabinet. This mood marked not only the English, but also the American Government. President Grant of the United States bluntly told the French chargé d'affaires that American sentiment in the Franco-Prussian War was on Germany's side.

British sympathy for Germany was, in fact, deeply rooted in the British admiration for German literature and philosophy, for German science and technology, for Germany's educational system, for her industrial and militarist organisation, and for Bismarck's system of social legislation. Every walk of Germany's public life appealed to a certain section of British society. Prussia's democratic absolutism on the Caesarian pattern, based on the double foundation of a hereditary monarchy and a democratic Parliament, as Disraeli visualised it, appealed very strongly to many English Conservatives; Bismarck's attempt to improve the condition of the working classes by active intervention of the

\* Quoted by Norman Angell, *Fruits of Victory*, p. 244-5.

State appealed to the English social reformers gathered round the Fabians by Sidney and Beatrice Webb; Prussia's system of compulsory national education appealed to the English educationists; German literature had inspired English poetry and literary criticism since Coleridge, and German philosophy, implanted in England by Carlyle, Hutcheson, Stirling, Thomas Hill Green, the Cairds, Seths, MacTaggart and Bernard Bosanquet, fascinated the flower of the rising generation of English thinkers. These sentiments did not conflict with the foreign interests of Great Britain. "As a moment's reflection will show there is no part of the globe in which British and German interests conflict in any serious way," stated Joseph Chamberlain in 1899.\*

So when Great Britain, tired of the "splendid isolation" into which she had lapsed after the Crimean War, sought, at the close of the century, to fortify her position in Europe by an alliance with the German Empire, the politicians of the school of Joseph Chamberlain and Lord Rosebery were supported by British public opinion.

Chamberlain's endeavour failed, because Kaiser Wilhelm entertained—as during the last two or three hundred years first Spain, then France, had entertained—the ambitious idea of a great alliance of the Continental Powers against England under the leadership of Germany. So when the British suggestion was rejected by the Kaiser and the German Empire started building a formidable navy, British feelings towards the German people changed. An increasing number of Englishmen now found that "the Germans" were not as good as they had thought. *The Times*, which had hailed Bismarck's victory over France in 1870 and had praised "the large-hearted, peace-loving, enlightened and honest people of Germany", discovered in 1902 that the same German people had then also committed the most appalling atrocities.†

This change for the worse in English feeling towards the Germans caused, conversely, a change for the better in English feelings towards the French; and the more hostile the former, the more considerate became the latter. "Yes, we detest the Germans, and that cordially", stated Lord Northcliffe in his notorious interview given to the *Matin* in June 1907. "They make themselves odious to all Europe. I will not allow anything to be printed in my paper which might offend France, but I should not wish anything at all which might be agreeable to Germany to be inserted." And as, in turn, the rulers of public opinion in Germany did their utmost to instigate German hatred

\* Elic Halévy, *A History of the English People*, Epilogue (1895-1905), Penguin Ed., p. 92.

† See Elic Halévy, *ibid.*, p. 196.

of the English people, so the ink of the hate-mongers on both sides of the Channel turned one day into the blood of millions of people.

Pondering on the top of the chimney about these curious phenomena, it dawned on me why all these things happened. Because Bismarck disliked Napoleon's hegemony in Europe, he resolved to wage war against the French people; because Napoleon dreaded Bismarck's hegemony in Europe, he resolved to wage war against the German people; because Bismarck, victorious in this war, annexed Alsace-Lorraine, France allied herself with Russia to regain the lost provinces in a war of revenge against the German people; because the Russian imperialists dreamt of the conquest of Constantinople, the domination of the Straits and the extension of Czarist domination over the Balkans, they welcomed the French alliance in their preparation for war against the German and the Austrian people; because the Austrian imperialists aimed at the extension of their power over the Balkans, they prepared war against the Russian people; because the German imperialists strove for hegemony in Europe, they prepared war against the English people; because England felt herself imperilled by Kaiser Wilhelm's ambitious designs, she reassured the French and the Russian imperialists of British aid in the forthcoming contest against the German and Austrian imperialists. Because the imperialists of one nation stood against the imperialists of the others, the common men of the rival nations, who knew nothing about the power gamble of their rulers, were persuaded to detest and to hate and, finally, to kill each other.

So it seemed as though the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 was the primary cause of the tragedy of Europe in 1914. That war poisoned the minds of two generations of Frenchmen and Germans with mortal hatred of each other; it drove France into the camp of Russia, and it divided Europe into two war blocs, armed to the teeth and ready to strike at a moment's notice. This division of Europe and, above all, the armaments race of the nations, was one of the dynamic forces which generated the World War of 1914.

Now, the Franco-Prussian War, which in its repercussions was one of the major catastrophes of humanity, was the work of a handful of people east and west of the Rhine. It is not true that Bismarck and Moltke were the only culprits; Bismarck certainly wanted the war, as he himself has avowed,\* and Moltke and Roon prepared it. But the war was wanted equally by Napoleon's Court, and above all by the French Foreign Minister Duc de Gramont and Marshal Leboeuf. The war was not willed by the

\* Otto von Bismarck, *Reflections and Reminiscences*, vol. II, pp. 41, 57.

majority of the French people. It is true that the Paris people, instigated by a chauvinist Press, clamoured for the declaration of war against Prussia; but though the French Chamber, under the pressure of the mob of Paris, passed the war credits by 264 votes to ten, only sixteen out of the eighty-one French Departments declared in favour of the war. Nor was the war willed by the German people; they were not asked what they thought; they were taken unaware by Bismarck's tricks.

Assuming now that those few people who committed this fateful act had not wielded the terrific power to engulf the French and German nations in mutual slaughter and hate; then the war of 1870 might have been averted. Until a year or two before the outbreak of the war, the relations between France and Prussia were most amicable. Napoleon, who posed as the champion of the oppressed and divided people of Italy, Poland and the Balkan Peninsula, viewed Bismarck's endeavour to unite the German people with hardly concealed sympathy; Bismarck, on his part, assured Napoleon in a secret pact with France (in 1867) that Prussia would not object to the annexation of Belgium by France. There were, in fact, no vital interests of either of the two nations at stake which made war between them unavoidable. Not even Bismarck contemplated the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine before 1870; and only the thin strata of French Chauvinists clamoured for the conquest of the Rhine as France's "natural frontier". A united Germany would in itself not have been a menace to France or harmed the feelings of a Frenchman. Thus there was nothing in the nature of the political, economic or spiritual relations between these two great nations which made their cleavage intrinsically necessary. And had Bismarck's and Napoleon's acts not produced this cleavage there would not have been any impetus for the mutual Franco-German hatred.

There was still another opportunity to avert the deluge and to retrieve the desperate situation of Europe, as created by the Franco-Prussian War. Britain had offered this opportunity when she suggested an understanding and, ultimately, an alliance with Germany. Between Britain and Germany, too, there was no essential conflicting interests which would have made an understanding between them intrinsically impossible. There was a natural, cultural and traditional affinity between these two nations which had produced, in the decades prior to the outbreak of war, much mutual sympathy. Although there was British-German competition in some branches of trade, Germany was the best customer in the English markets and Britain was the best customer in the German, and the economic prosperity of the one nation turned out to be a blessing to the other.

There were, however, certain vested interests in Germany which aspired to a monopoly position in various colonial spheres; and there were certain branches of trade which were highly interested in the armaments race and in naval building; and there were Kaiser Wilhelm's aspirations to European hegemony, and there was a powerful and influential section of the German Press which willingly, in the service of these interests, poisoned the minds of the German people with hatred of the English.

But it might well be that if Germany had been a democracy when Joseph Chamberlain proposed a British-German understanding his suggestion would have been accepted. But the German people were not consulted by Wilhelm and the rulers of Germany about whether or not they wanted to live in peace and friendship with the English people; they were not even informed of Chamberlain's advances. They were misled about Britain's intentions and were unable to pierce the smokescreen of lies, prejudices and hatred which the propaganda of the German imperialists had put between the German and the British nation.

So it came about that the English, greatly admired by their German "cousins" for their literature, philosophy, political thought and political art as empire-builders, suddenly became in the eyes of the German patriots a nation of mean "shopkeepers"; equally the Germans became in the eyes of the English patriots a nation of bullies; and the Russian people became in the eyes of the Austrian patriots a warlike race imbued with imperialist urge; and the French became in the eyes of the German patriots a race of libertines and debauchees. In short, every people who for the sake of their own imperialists fought other countries' people became in the eyes of the contending people a race of rascals. Macaulay considered the Dutch, of course only in the matter of the conflict over the Spice island, "as fiends in human shape, lying, robbing, ravishing", although the Dutch are, as J. L. Motley emphasised, "a portion of the Anglo-Saxon race—essentially the same whether in Friesland, England or Massachusetts". And because the English waged war against the Americans, Jefferson thought about Great Britain that "the sun of her glory is fast descending to the horizon. Her Philosophy has crossed the Channel, her freedom the Atlantic, and herself seems passing to that awful dissolution whose issue is not given human foresight to see." He hated England, and he believed that England hated America. "In spite of treaties," he wrote in 1786, "England is still our enemy. Her hatred is deep rooted and cordial, and nothing is wanting with her but the power to wipe us, and the land which we live on, out of existence. . . . That nation hates us,

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their ministers hate us, and their King more than all other men. They have the impudence to avow this." \*

This feeling of contempt and hatred is powerfully fortified by the conviction of the moral superiority of one's own people and of being "elected" for a special "mission" in the world. Xenophanes of Colophus was by no means inspired merely by the Hebrew conception of the "chosen people" when he observed that "If oxen and horses or lions had hands, and could paint with their hands, and produce works of art as men do, horses would paint the forms of gods like horses, and oxen like oxen, and make their bodies in the image of their several kinds. The Ethiopians make their gods black and snub-nosed; the Thracians say theirs have blue eyes and red hair." So even in our time every people visualises God in their own image.

Although all the European nations have embraced Christianity, with its belief in a single God, Father of all mankind, Slavophile writers have discovered in the image of God quite distinct Russian features, and there are German poets and men of letters who speak of a "God of the Germans". We learnt from Victor Hugo that France is "the Saviour of the nations", and we learnt from Fichte that Providence has specially commissioned the Germans to achieve the "realm of justice for all humanity". The Nazi philosophy has, of course, advanced Fichte's claim still farther. "I believe in Germany," so the Nazi creed runs, "because I believe in God, for God created Germany when the order of the old world was destroyed by the forces of darkness. God's people live in Germany. . . . Germany is God's land and a holy land." † And as far as the English are concerned, there was a tendency to assume, as the Elizabethan Lyly maintained, that "the living God is only the English God", or, as Cromwell thought, the English are, to say the least, "a people with the stamp of God upon them". "It must be admitted," Professor Ernest Barker observes, "that there has been a certain tendency in our thought, if not to claim God for our nation, at any rate to vindicate the claim of our nation to be regarded as belonging particularly to God"; and on another page of his book he says, "Without vindicating any apostleship, we have rather cherished a Hebrew conception that we are an elect and particular people." ‡ This conception was, as G. M. Young points out, the principal element in British imperialism. "By the beginning of the nineteenth century the virtue was advancing on a broad invincible front. . . . The Evangelicals gave to the island a creed which was at once the

\* Quoted by Gilbert Chinard, *Thomas Jefferson*, pp. 123 and 208-9.

† Hans Bergman, *Oldenburger Staatszeitung*, December 12, 1943.

‡ Ernest Barker, *National Character and the Factors in its Formation*, pp. 195, 236.

basis of its morality and the justification of its wealth and power, and with the creed, that sense of being an Elect People which, set to a more blatant tune, became a principal element in Late Victorian Imperialism." \*

It was for me a most curious experience to observe how every one of the multitude of nations which populated Austria asserted its feeling of superiority over the others. Because the German Austrians had produced Mozart and Grillparzer and other great men, the intellectual, or cultural, or moral level of the German-speaking greengrocer round the corner where I lived in Vienna was by no means higher than the intellectual, or cultural, or moral level of the Viennese greengrocers speaking German with a Czech, or Polish, or Hungarian, or Jewish accent. But the German-speaking greengrocer would look down upon the greengrocers with a foreign accent with utter contempt, or at the best with benevolent indulgence. In the same way the Czech greengrocer would treat the Slovakian, the Hungarian the Croat, the Croat the Serb, the Jew who had emigrated from Bohemia the Jew who had emigrated from Galicia, and *vice versa*. Just as Harold Bers, listening attentively to the voices from the pond, has described them in the strophe:

"What is a duck?" repeated the trout, sneering and blowing a bubble.  
"A duck is a creature for which God need hardly have gone to the trouble.  
A more awkward swimmer it has never been my embarrassment to be in the same pool with.  
That grotesque proboscis, how appropriate a gadget for him to play the fool with,  
He tries to be a fish; says he has as much right to this place as we have!"  
"A fish?" barked the mallard, "what an unspeakably revolting little creature!  
In fact, I'm hard put to think of a single, solitary redeeming feature.  
The way he swims, so slinking, so slithering, so Japanese-like,  
With none of the frank forthrightness we ducks, or even our first cousins, geese-like.  
To sum up, if you'll bear with me for just an additional minute,  
A fish out of water is a lot better off than one who's unfortunately in it."

It is the same in the human Zoo, and it is a factor which has made history. The arrogance engendered by the feeling of being the flower of mankind, with which certain patriotic German and French circles looked down on the other nations of the earth, was sickening in normal times; it became a devastating curse in times of international convulsions. Then every nation vindicated war and conquest with its own superiority and the "mission" flowing from its assumed superiority. "Probably everyone would agree," this theory runs, "that an Englishman would be right in considering his way of looking at the world and at life better than

\* G. M. Young, *Victorian England*, p. 4.

that of the Maori or Hottentot, and no one will object in the abstract to England doing her best to impose her better and higher view on those savages. But the same idea will carry you much farther. In-so-far as an Englishman differs in essentials from a Swede or Belgian, he believes that he represents a more perfectly developed standard of general excellence. . . . How far such feeling (of superiority) is, in any particular case, justified, history alone decides. But it is essential that each claimant for the first place should put forward his whole energy to prove his right. This is the moral justification for international strife and for war.” \*

This was precisely the theory with which, since the days of Aristotle, the forcible domination and exploitation of men by men have been morally justified. With the spread of Stoicism, when slavery was revolting to the sense of equality as developed in natural law, Aristotle, in the first book of his *Politics*, took great pains to calm down the disturbed consciousness of his fellow-countrymen by asserting that nature had produced two kinds of human beings: masters and slaves, and that, although both receive reason, the slaves are not endowed with the use of it. “It is,” he said, “the intention of nature to make the bodies of slaves and free men different from each other, that the one should be robust for their necessary purpose, but the other erect. . . . It is clear, then, that some men are free by nature, others are slaves.”

However, this theory was palpably contradicted in Aristotle's lifetime by the fact that among the slaves were men of the highest spiritual and artistic abilities. Once more Lincoln contended it with his irresistible common-sense. In one of his speeches he said:

“If A can prove, however conclusively, that he may of right enslave B, why may not B snatch the same argument, even prove equally, that he may enslave A?”

“You say A is white and B is black. It is colour, then, the lighter having the right to enslave the darker? Take care! By this rule, you are to be the slave to the first man you meet, with a fairer skin than your own.

“You do not mean colour exactly? You mean the whites are intellectually superior to the blacks and, therefore, have the right to enslave them. Take care again! By this rule, you are to be slave to the first man you meet with an intellect superior to your own.

\* Earl Grey, *Memoir of Herbert Hervey*, quoted by J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, p. 158.

"But, say you, it is a question of interest; and, if you can make it your interest, you have the right to enslave another. Very well—and if he can make his interest, he has the right to enslave you." \*

Nevertheless, Aristotle's theory, in its essence, still prevails in the mind of men, and serves to-day, just as it served three thousand years ago, as the moral justification for the domination of men by men. To-day, just as during the last three or four hundred years, there is hardly a war which, however sordid its motives, is not morally justified by the claims of the aggressors to the "mission" to impose forcibly upon their victims "a higher way of life". This was Philip II's moral justification for the cruel tortures inflicted upon the Dutch; this was Ferdinand of Austria's justification for the misery which he caused by unleashing the Counter-Reformation and the Thirty Years' War; this was Soliman's justification for his drive against the West; this was the moral justification for the partition of Poland, for Napoleon's wars of conquest of Europe, for every war of colonial conquest—from the conquest of Mexico by Cortez and the conquest of Peru by Francisco Pizarro to the Boer War, and, finally, to Hitler's war and extermination of uncounted millions of human beings. The victims of the conquerors and persecutors were always branded as an inferior race by nature and in dire need of the better and higher way of life of their vanquishers. "The Boer stood for ignorance, for prejudice, for race hatred and for misgovernment; Great Britain stood for fair play, for freedom and for justice."†

And so it was this theory with which both sides of the belligerents of 1914 attempted to prove the moral justification of the particular war they waged. This theory was even accepted by Socialists in both camps. They urged the support of war not only on the ground that the fatherland was imperilled and that its defence was an inescapable duty for everyone, but also on the ground of the "mission" which everyone's country was endowed to carry out with the force of arms into the opposing country. Many Socialists suddenly forgot that this war was unleashed by imperialist governments and that their aims were imperialist aims. They discovered a Socialist meaning of the war, as far, of course, as their own country was concerned. The German Professor Johann Plenge expressed the mood of thought of many a German Majority Socialist when he praised the war which Germany was waging as a Socialist war, and when he claimed for the German nation the position of "the spiritual head

\* Quoted by Arthur Bryant, *The American Ideal*, p. 74.

† Spenser Wilkinson, *War and Policy*, 1900, p. 368.

of Europe". He said, "In the realm of ideas Germany was the most convincing champion of Socialist dreams, and in the realm of reality the most vigorous architect of the highest organised economy. The twentieth century rests with the German people. And however the war ends, we are the model people. Our ideas will determine the goals of life and humanity." \*

And from the other side of the trenches Edouard Vaillant, the editor of the leading French Socialist daily, *Humanité*, wrote: "When the motherland is saved, the freedom of the nations, liberated from imperialism, will be saved. . . . We are again experiencing the time of revolutionary wars, but under incomparably better conditions. For all Frenchmen know that they are fighting for the noblest interests of humanity. . . ." †

The war of defence of everyone's country had become a war of conquest of other peoples' countries in order to impose upon them "a higher and better way of life".

I felt deeply that Socialists who adhered to this theory were the prey of a palpable self-deception. I felt certain that the theory itself was fundamentally wrong. For the "better and higher way of life" cannot be imposed upon "enemy people" who prefer their own way of life, which they regard as the better; even less can it be imposed by the force of mass-slaughter. It was self-evident to me that imperialism could not be conquered by a victory of German imperialism over the Russian, French and British imperialisms, nor by the victory of these over German imperialism; every people had to conquer imperialism in its own country. I felt it was an utter disgrace to the very idea of Socialism to support this war allegedly for the sake of Socialism. Socialism cannot be enforced by foreign conquest; it can be achieved only in the struggle of the working class of every country in fraternal solidarity with the working classes of all countries. I, then, felt that Socialists who had abandoned the idea of international class struggle for Socialism lived, in Plato's words, with "a lie in the soul".

\* Johann Plenge, 1789 und 1914. *Die symbolischen Jahre in der Geschichte der Menschheit*, p. 20.

† Quoted by Friedrich Adler, *Die Erneuerung der Internationale*, p. 26.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### THE JUGGERNAUT ROLLS ON

"... a black and settled night of ignorance and anti-Christian tyranny."—*Milton, Of Reformation.*

"WHEN WILL this slaughter end?" we asked each other, day and night, as we trudged along the dusty roads of Galicia, or waded through the mud of Volhinia, or crossed the Hungarian plains, or in Serbia attempted to force the Save, or fought two major battles on the rocky Karst plateau of Doberdo north of the river Isonzo, or struggled in the Italian Alps with ice and snow on the high plateaus of Lavarone and Folgaria, or dodged through the inferno of the Italian artillery barrage during our offensive on the Sette Commune. For more than a year our unit had hardly had a day's rest. We had covered many hundreds of miles, had seen scores of villages and small towns laid in ruins, had passed frightened Polish peasants fleeing from the deluge, had crossed forests and gorges impregnated with the pestilential smell of rotting corpses of men and beasts. And I repeated longingly Isaiah's lines: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!"

In these wanderings through hell two redeeming experiences stand out. The first was on Easter Sunday, 1915, only a few days before the forcing of the Russian positions at the Dunajetz. The sun was just rising when I climbed up to my observation post on the top of the chimney. Its first rays kindled the sparks of dew on the plains behind the river, and soon the fields were bathed in golden light. The warbling of the larks had ceased, and an infinite peacefulness filled earth and sky. There was still a little chirping and twittering in the air, emphasising the quietness of this corner of the world, and only the trenches below the chimney brought back the bleak reality of war.

Looking down at the Russian trenches, I saw a soldier slowly lift his head over the crest. As he was not fired on, he boldly put his arms upon the rampart and looked round curiously. After a while, a second, then a third head emerged from the depths of the opposite trenches, and one of the men, apparently encouraged by the absence of rifle-fire, swung his leg over the crest, sat astride it for a few minutes, then jumped down towards the river. There he stood, looking across it and shouting something. It seemed that the Russian soldiers had taken it for granted that

the sacredness of Easter Sunday would not be disgraced by mutual slaughter, for soon the man at the river was joined by others, and indeed not a single shot was fired. Shortly after, one or two Austrian soldiers crawled out of their trenches and also went down to the river. They shouted across to the Russians, and the two groups moved slowly into the shallow water to meet each other in midstream. As there were Poles, Czechs and Ruthenians among our men, they might have understood the Russians. At any rate, there they stood in the river, every one of them like John the Baptist, apparently chatting cheerfully. This example was followed by others. I could see Russians and Austrians forming groups all along the river and sauntering to and from the trenches as though it was Bank Holiday.

There was certainly no truce agreed upon by the commanders of this sector of the front. But since there was a lull in the military operations, everyone appeared to hate the thought of breaking the holiness of peace to which the day of Resurrection is consecrated.

As the guns were silenced, the human voice could again sound, and could express in its simple, awkward way the deep underlying feeling of natural mutual sympathy and community which pervades all humanity. The racial and national antagonism which had been fed, fostered and inflamed through all the years seemed to have vanished immediately in every one of the Russian and Austrian soldiers when they met each other in the flesh. I did not know what they were talking about; but through my telescope I saw laughing, happy faces.

The following day the sordid business of war went on as usual, and about a week later our artillery, in preparation for the big break-through, pounded the Russian trenches, including that of the fellows who had paid us a visit, to dust.

The second experience was of a different nature. At the beginning of June 1915, after the break-through of the Russian defences at Gorlitz south of our sector, the Russians retreated to the river San. We had to fight nearly a fortnight until we were able to force the river and occupy Sinejava, a small town half a mile east of the San. Next day, after the infantry had taken the place, our heavy artillery entered and took up positions in a semi-circle outside the town. It was late in the afternoon of the same day when I arrived there in Colonel Janetzka's detachment of observers, and without delay we had to connect the gun-points and the observer posts of our group with our command post. I returned to headquarters late in the evening, and after having eaten something I sank down on the floor with my clothes and boots on, dead-tired, and fell asleep instantly.

I must have slept like a log, for I was not aware that the Russians had in the meantime opened up a terrific barrage on Sinejava. I only remember that someone kicked my leg and shouted at me, "Hi, boy, get up and get out of this bloody place as quickly as you can!" Before I came to my senses he had disappeared; and when I looked round I found that I was alone, and that my detachment had already left in the haste of retreat and had overlooked the bundle which I had become.

I jumped up and rushed into the street. The town was in a state of panic. The shouts of the men mingled with the roars of the exploding shells, and when, in the twilight of the morning, I reached the road which led from the town to the pontoon-bridge over the river, I saw a picture of most appalling confusion. The road was jammed with heavy guns, soldiers on foot, soldiers on horseback, motor-cars with Staff officers, horse-drawn vehicles, the caravans of peasant carts, and here and there, lost in the surging mass of men, beasts, lorries and guns, a herd of cows. On the right and left of the blocked road huge columns of infantry and artillery pressed into the flanks of the columns on the road and tried to force access to the road themselves. Officers on horseback shouted at each other threateningly, some of them gesticulating wildly with sabres or horse-whips. Although shrapnel shells exploded incessantly over our heads, no one took shelter, or was able to do, because once he was caught in this massive stream he could not disentangle himself. Everyone pushed forward frantically to escape Russian captivity and the shower of bullets. But the bridge was very small. We could move only extremely slowly. Time and again a man (or a horse) was hit and sank to the ground, and not all the wounded could be saved by lifting them on to a gun or a cart. Some were trampled to death.

When I crossed the bridge and, after searching for hours, found my unit, I learned what had caused the rout. A whole regiment, the Czech Infantry Regiment No. 37—men and officers, bag and baggage, with all their equipment—had gone over to the Russians and opened a breach through which the enemy had thrust into our positions round the town. Although the breach was sealed for a moment in bitter fighting, the Russian assault was so powerful, and our losses in men and guns so heavy, that the town and the eastern bank of the river had to be given up at once.

This was the first sign of revolt of Austrian Slav nations against the Hapsburg Empire. The first reaction I felt was one of deep satisfaction. It might appear strange that I should have approved an action which is commonly called high treason.



But, frankly, I did. First, because I wished with all my heart for the collapse of the Hapsburgs and the Hohenzollerns. Certainly I never believed that with their collapse the world would be "liberated from imperialism", still less from capitalism. I was deceived neither by the theories of the patriotic German and Austrian Socialists, nor by those of the patriotic French and British Socialists. I scorned the suggestion that this war was waged by both sides in the "interests of humanity", or for the "sake of liberty", or for the "sake of Socialism"! I considered the war a contest between two rival imperialist groups, and I felt profoundly that Socialists ought to have nothing to do with it.

Yet I was unable to suppress my burning hatred of the Hapsburg and Hohenzollern régimes. True, I hated the Czarist régime even more fiercely. But I had witnessed the revolution in Russia in 1905 and seen how formidable popular forces, barely awakened and crudely organised, had risen spontaneously from the depths of society and had shaken the edifice of the Muscovite Empire. I was absolutely sure that the Russian Revolution would rise again and would overthrow the moribund Czardom. But then I knew Czarism only from afar; I knew the Hapsburg and Hohenzollern régime from my own experience. Living in the Hapsburg Empire before 1914 was like living in the blight of a desolate, vaporous swamp. No healthy political life could thrive, no Socialist aspirations could hope for fulfilment there. But while this decaying régime was incapable of rejuvenation by its own efforts, it sought to regain its vigour in a major war; so it set the world ablaze. What were the prospects for the people of the Hapsburg Empire if it should survive? The poisonous swamp would remain, only enlarged by the inclusion of Serbia. The barren régime of absolutism, slovenliness and corruption would re-emerge, reinforced by a victory. From the first hour of the war I felt that the Hapsburg régime had to die so that the people could live.

I saw Germany in a different light. There was vigour, there was a forceful spiritual life, there was a powerful Labour movement, there was even a strong and ever-growing section of the middle classes striving for democracy; so there was hope. Yet all these popular forces counted for nothing, or very little, in the Germany of Wilhelm II. The State was the officer caste, the corps of the higher ranks of the bureaucracy, the rulers of steel, gold and coal, the lords of the land and, above all, the Prussian nobility with the King at its head. It was not only that in those sections of society the real political and economic power was vested; they ruled the country without any pretence of popular consent. They did not even pretend to derive their power from

the people; they claimed to be endowed, through the medium of the Prussian King, by God the Almighty with the power to rule the people. So in the hierarchy of German society a young lieutenant of twenty stood toweringly above a university professor or a trade union leader of sixty, and the rulers of Germany entertained utter disdain for the members of Parliament. If Hohenzollern Germany, I thought, were to be victorious in the war, this system would appear to be vindicated by history and "Providence"; it would re-emerge more powerful and arrogant than ever before.

I knew that England also had her aristocracy and her powerful vested interests, and that France had her officer class. But French militarism was finally defeated in *l'affaire Dreyfus*, and in England the Liberals were then in power. In England, as well as in France, whoever was in power at least pretended to rule with the consent of the governed people. There the ruling classes did not demonstrate their contempt for the people whom they exploited; they wooed them. In Germany the ruling classes did not even take the trouble to conceal their disdain for the "rabble in the street". It is hardly possible to convey the deep impression which the Central Europeans got from Lloyd George's campaign for social reforms, and against the privileges of the House of Lords, in the years prior to the outbreak of the war. A volume of his speeches during this period appeared in a German edition (under the title *Bessere Zeiten*). It was one of the most powerful witnesses to the vigour of British democracy. These were also the years of "Labour unrest" in England, those first promising attempts at self-assertion of the British working class.

What a contrast to the political life in Germany, where the road to any social progress was blocked by a haughty caste which, resting on the formidable power of the armed forces and the State-machine, scorned the endeavour to make Germany a democracy! While I held that a victory of the Hohenzollerns would strengthen the forces of reaction, I did not see any danger arising for British Socialism from an English victory.

Nor did I believe that a defeat of Germany or Austria would amount to the gloomy disaster with which the patriots used to scare the people. A defeated Germany might perhaps lose Alsace-Lorraine, and that I did not think would be so hideous. She might also lose her colonies; that, I thought, would be a great relief. Germany, I assumed, would remain within her national boundaries, the German people would live and, liberated from the Hohenzollern régime, would rebuild a free country.

That the Hapsburgs would not survive a defeat of Austria

was clear to me from the beginning of the war; that was precisely what I had wished for. In that event, I imagined, Austria would become a republican federation of her constituent nations, and thus create the conditions for a true democracy.

This, then, was my first thought when I learned about the desertion of the Czech regiment. This thought was accompanied by the hope that the example which the Czech regiment had given would be followed not only by other Slav nationalists, but also by the German Socialists in Austria, and would soon bring the war to an end. This sanguine hope became even stronger when I received, together with the news of the Czech desertion, the news that Italy had declared war on Austria.

Well, it took another three and a half years before the Hapsburgs collapsed!

When during the Second World War I was frequently asked by English friends to explain the enigma of why the German workers continued to fight in spite of my assertion that they were not Nazis, I recalled the story of the Czech regiment No. 37. It had deserted as early as June 1915. This act of surrender certainly expressed the feelings of the overwhelming majority of the Czech people. The Yugoslav people, and a great section of the German working class in Austria, were in a similar mood. Counting together the Slavs and the German Socialists in Austria who opposed the war, it might fairly be said that at least two-fifths of the total of the Austrian population hated to fight for the Hapsburgs. It should also be remembered that, during the second half of the war, the Austrian people lived in a state of half-starvation which in itself is the most powerful motive for rebellion (whereas the German people were adequately fed during the Second World War), and that the Hapsburgs' coercive power was incomparably weaker than Hitler's. This was proved unmistakably by strikes of workers in the hundreds of thousands, by a mutiny in half of Austria's navy, by mass desertions on all fronts, by frequent riots by women in the markets of Vienna, by mutinies of the garrisons of Rumburg and Sarajevo. Yet, although the Hapsburg war machine was cracking in every joint, it remained in gear for 1550 days of the war. Only a decisive military defeat, Bulgaria's collapse in September 1918, was able to release the popular revolutionary forces and to bring about the Hapsburgs' doom.

My disappointment with the slow development of the Socialist resistance to war in Austria was deepened by everything I saw in Vienna on my first real leave from the front in August 1916,

In Germany the resistance to war found its vocal expression in those Socialist members of the Reichstag and the Prussian

Diet who opposed the war policy of the Majority Socialists. When Karl Liebknecht, on December 2, 1914, voted against the war credits, it was a solitary vote of no consequence; but his speech in the House, in which he justified his vote by branding the war as an imperialist war, rang throughout the whole country and kindled the flame of resistance.\* When he was expelled from the Reichstag and arraigned by a court-martial for high treason (in June 1915), more than 50,000 workers in Berlin struck.

In Austria the Parliament had been sent home by the Government many months before the outbreak of war and was not assembled until 1917; it was not asked for war credits; the Socialists had no opportunity to state before the country their attitude towards the war, and the Press was fettered.

In Austria, further, the compact leadership of the Socialist Party, headed by Victor Adler, supported the war; only solitary Socialists—like Friedrich Adler, Leopold Winarsky, Therese Schlesinger, Robert Danneberg, Gabriele Proft and Max Adler—respected, but without influence, opposed the war as International Socialists; and Otto Bauer, who did carry great weight in the movement and who, I was certain, would have joined the ranks of the Internationalists, was, unfortunately, a prisoner of war in a Siberian camp.

In Germany, however, the Socialist resistance to the war was headed by the most prominent leaders of the movement. All the great figures of German Socialism united in this struggle: Karl Kautsky, Eduard Bernstein, Hugo Haase, the socialist spokesman in the Reichstag, Rudolf Hilferding, Hugo Breitscheid, Gustav Eckstein, and of course Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring and Clara Zetkin. Nearly 1000 well-known members of the Party signed (in June 1915) an open letter to the Executive demanding the return to the policy of international Socialism. At the head of the Socialist war-resisters stood the majority of the Berlin organisation (and the leading daily, the *Vorwärts*) and the majority of the Socialist members of the Prussian Diet. It is commonly assumed that "the Prussians" are the most bellicose tribe of all the German people; but in fact it was in Prussia that the Socialist opposition to the war was stronger than anywhere in Europe.

In recalling the story of the First World War and studying

\* Liebknecht's deed had repercussions even far beyond Germany and Austria. How it influenced, for example, the Socialists in France is testified by Alfred Rosmer, one of the leading French war resisters, who recorded: "But it was chiefly the heroic act of Karl Liebknecht who freed himself from a party discipline which had become intolerable and alone voted against war credits at the memorable sitting of the Reichstag on December 2nd, 1914, which brought us the most decisive encouragement".—*The Fight against War in France during the War in We did not Fight*, p. 302.

some of its documents, I feel that I should quote a motion of the Prussian Socialists (a most remarkable document entirely unknown in England and France) at the session of the Prussian Diet on June 17, 1916. This statement, after indicting the German government, declares:

"We do not see our well-being in the creation of an imperialist Greater Germany, or of a *Mitteleuropa*, but in mutual political and economic relations between the nations, fostered by the extension of democracy, the abolition of secret diplomacy and by agreements aiming at the abolition of customs barriers.

"As international Social Democrats, faithful to our principles, we will never take any responsibility for the infringement of the political and economic independence of other nations or for their oppression. For we feel the sufferings of the workers of the countries confronting us to-day as enemies as deeply as we feel the sufferings of our own people.

"Our enemies will be prepared to conclude peace only if they are ensured of the same degree of security and respect of their national rights and interests as we Social Democrats claim for Germany. In particular we demand the restoration of the undiminished independence of Belgium and the full righting of the wrong which has been inflicted upon this country, as the Reichskanzler admitted on August 4, 1914.

"The common people of no country have willed the war. Everywhere the masses of the people demand with ever-increasing impatience that the appalling slaughter should be ended. Uncountable are the victims of the war. With every day the sea of blood and tears increases. Are those who have unleashed the war aware of their guilt towards their own people and the whole of humanity? Are they not shuddering at the increasing bitterness of the masses of the people with the continuation of the war?

"If the governments of the belligerent countries still refuse to make peace, they act in antagonism to the great masses of population who long to return to peaceful work.

"Millions of healthy human beings have been destroyed, other millions have been maimed. During a few months the civilisation built up in a century has been wiped out. It will need scores of years to rebuild what has been destroyed.

"The Government which still refuses to offer their hand for peace increases the degree of guilt towards all humanity no less than towards their own people.

"We demand that the German Government before all other governments should take the first step and should

relinquish their plans of conquest, thus paving the way for peace.

"The war and its course has stigmatised the imperialist system of force before the eyes of the world. Peace and culture cannot be secured by the force of bayonets, by conquest and oppression, but only by the solidarity of the workers of all countries."\*

It should be noted that this motion was moved in the Prussian Diet more than a year before the United States entered the war, and when Germany's armies still stood powerful in France and in Russia.

On my leave in Vienna I learned all about the Socialist war-resistance movement in Germany through my sister Berta. She had lived in England for a time, where she was active with A. Creech Jones, James Maxton, and Frank Horrabin in the I.L.P. and in the Labour College Movement; she went to Germany when the war began, and was working in Rosa Luxemburg's group until she was arrested, detained for a time, and then expelled from Germany. Returning to Vienna, she joined the Karl Marx Association, a very small group of Socialist war resisters led by Friedrich Adler, Leopold Winarsky and Robert Danneberg. But she also remained in close touch with her friends of the Luxemburg group and the German Independent Socialists (who had split away from the Majority Socialists), and was amply provided with pamphlets, leaflets and news sheets, produced by the various Socialist war-resistance centres in Germany.

By temperament optimistic and easily excitable, my sister used the most glowing colours in her description of the war-resistance movements not only in Germany, but also in Austria; she tried hard to persuade me that in Austria the revolution was lurking just round the corner and likely to break out at any moment. Robert Danneberg gave me, however, a more sober and sombre picture of the real situation. From the beginning of the war Robert Danneberg stood unswervingly for Socialist internationalism. In six articles, published in the Vienna weekly, *Die Volkstribüne*, at the beginning of 1915, he courageously defended the case of international Socialism against the fashionable Socialist patriotism and nationalism of August 1914. In his talk with me he admitted that the workers hated the war and that there was a revolutionary mood in the shops. "But any one who dared to make anti-war propaganda would instantly be sent to the front or put into prison," he said. "You can't imagine how ruthlessly the State-machine rules."

\* Quoted by Friedrich Adler, *Die Erneuerung der Internationale*, pp. 83-4.

He told me the story of a friend of his, a humble clerk in the Labour Health Insurance Office of Freiwaldau, a small town in Silesia, who had mimeographed a pacifist poem which, perhaps mistakenly, was published by a respectable patriotic daily in Vienna, and had given a dozen copies to women who came to his office. This is the poem:

"I did not bring up my son to fight,  
I brought him up to be the pride and joy of my old age.  
Who dared to put the weapon in his hand  
That he might kill another mother's son?  
The time has come to lay down arms.  
There never would be another war,  
If all mothers in the world would cry aloud:  
'I did not bring up my son to fight!'"

The man was sentenced to death by hanging for copying and distributing this poem.

But the worst, Danneberg bitterly complained, was perhaps not the formidable coercive power of the State, but the utter confusion of mind in the Socialist leadership.

"You see, Renner now preaches that the war is making for Socialism, because the rich and poor alike get the same ration of half a pound of potatoes! What do you think about this potato-Socialism?" he exclaimed.

"But you're helpless," he added; "you are in the grip of the party machinery; and the few who do resist the current are lonely voices in the wilderness."

This was so everywhere, I found out, perhaps with the exception of Germany. The French writer, Raymond Lefebvre, a member of the group of French Socialist war-resisters round Pierre Monatte and Merrheim, described the mood in his circle: "We limited ourselves to sadly poking the chilled ashes of the International; to making with bitter memories a huge list of those who had failed; to foreseeing with useless insight the length of a war of attrition, in which civilisation alone would be vanquished."

But everywhere, too, the few who did remain faithful to their ideas were swayed by the same feelings as Lefebvre, Monatte and Merrheim. "A gloomy pride still dominated us," Lefebvre goes on: "the pride of remaining faithful to our beliefs, the pride of fighting against that wave of foolishness in which so many powerful heads, with the sole exception of Romain Rolland, had wallowed. Rosmer, the poet Martinet, Trotsky, Guilbeaux, Merrheim and two or three others whose names I do not know, were, we realised, in the whole of Paris among the last Europeans

of that fine old intelligent Europe and also the first men of an international future, which we knew must come.”\*

I went back to the front after the fortnight's leave had expired with a mixture of depression, a very faint hope and, perhaps, something of the “gloomy pride” of belonging to the faithful few.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### FRIEDRICH ADLER

“And truly one who sees, what seemed so strong,  
The Power of this tyrant and his lords  
Melt like a passing smoke, a nightly dream,  
Might ask, why we endure their yoke so long;  
But that we know how every perilous feat  
Of daring, easy as it seems when done,  
Is easy at no moment but the right.”—M. Arnold, *Merope*.

WHEN I returned to the front on the Lavarone Plateau, I was ordered to take over the command of a battery of four 75-mm. field-guns. Two of them had to be placed in the artificial cave of a huge rock which dominated the entrance to the Assa gorge, behind which we had retreated from the Sette Commune; this position was called “Gibraltar”. The other two guns had to be placed in trenches, blasted into a steep and jagged precipice, dominating the opposite flank of the gorge; this position was called “Tiger-Position”. At the same time my battery was transferred from Colonel Janetzka's artillery group to the fourth battalion of the Infantry Regiment No. 4, the popular Viennese Deutschmeister Regiment, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Natiesta, which manned these two positions.

For the first time during the war I was attached to an infantry unit and shared the life of infantrymen in the trenches. It was not then an exceedingly hard life. The Italian lines were some miles away, and during the seven months I was in command of the battery the Italians did not attempt to force the gorge. So we had a fairly quiet time, though the Italian artillery kept under fire the only road along which food and supplies for the troops in the front line could be brought. The job of silencing the enemy guns was not mine, but that of the artillery of Janetzka's group.

\* Alfred Rosmer, *ibid.*, p. 301.



My sole task was, in the event of an assault, to block access to Pedescale, the village where the Assa and Asti gorges meet.

The headquarters of the Deutschmeister battalion lay in a fold of the precipice of the Folgaria Plateau, less than half a mile behind Pedescale. Whenever an officer came from the trenches to headquarters on business, he was cordially invited by Lieut.-Colonel Natiesta to stay for lunch, or supper, in his staff mess. I was asked to stay one day when he had sent for me.

We took our places at a long, narrow table over which Natiesta presided in the middle of its broad side. I was treated, so to speak, as a guest, being the only artillery officer in his unit, and was placed opposite him. Natiesta, a thick-set man in his fifties, greyish, and pleasant-looking, was chatting in the most jovial manner about this and that, when an orderly came in and handed him a note. Natiesta read it, shook his head repeatedly and murmured, "Amazing, indeed amazing!" Then he excitedly addressed the officers at the table:

"Can you imagine what's happened? Somebody has shot Stürgkh dead!"

There was first a whisper of surprise and excitement, until a Captain, sitting at the left of Natiesta, asked:

"Pardon me, Lieutenant-Colonel, may I ask who the scoundrel was who shot him?"

"Certainly," Natiesta answered, pleased. "This is what the telegram says." And he read it aloud:

"Vienna, October 21, 1916. Prime Minister Count Stürgkh has been shot dead while taking lunch at the Hotel Meissl and Schadn. The assassin, who was arrested on the spot, is Dr. Friedrich Adler, son of the Member of Parliament, Dr. Victor Adler."

"That's all I know," he added, smiling.

I must have gone pale, or murmured something, when Natiesta mentioned Friedrich Adler's name, for Natiesta looked at me and asked, "Do you by any chance know this man Adler?"

"Yes, sir, I know him."

"Oh, that is very interesting. Come on now, tell us all about him," he urged me kindly.

I told him, while the others listened with the greatest curiosity, all I knew about the history of Friedrich Adler.

"But what sort of man is he?" Natiesta asked.

"He is the most kind-hearted man I know," I answered, with a little embarrassment.

"So you think that this wretch is kind-hearted," interposed the Captain in a metallic voice; he looked at me contemptuously.

"That's very interesting. Well, I hope they will wring this dog's neck and kind heart very slowly."

I met the Captain's eyes firmly. How frightening they were! Beneath his right one there was a deep scar, enlarging and deepening the socket like the eye-hole of a death's-head; his haggard face was motionless, his features hard, his thin lips cruel—he looked capable of torturing a man to death.

Natiesta, apparently afraid of awkward developments, said appeasingly to the Captain, "Oh, don't worry, Captain, it will be all right," and then he changed the table-talk over to another topic. It seemed that Natiesta also had become a little nervous, and, contrary to his custom, he rose from the table immediately after we had finished our meal.

I left the officers' mess dejected by what I had experienced at the table, and walked alone towards my place without noticing that somebody had followed me. He stopped me with a "Hi", and when I turned to him, I saw a gay, fat, red-haired young officer whom I remembered having seen at the table.

"Hi, fellow," he called, looking at me with bright blue eyes, and offering me his hand. "My name is Hans Freistadt, and I feel I must tell you how moved I was by all you said about Friedrich Adler."

"Thank you very much; it's very kind of you. Do you also know Friedrich Adler?" I asked.

"I've never heard his name before," he answered, "and about his father I only know that he is the Socialist leader, and I'm not a Socialist," he replied. "But that's not the point. The point is that you haven't forsaken your friend, and that's fine. You spoke about your friend's kindness of heart—forgive me, but I haven't heard such talk since the war began. You know," he went on, "we are living in a Great Time, because the age of the dehumanisation of man has commenced, and so we have ceased to be human beings; we are heroes, pure and simple, and heroes don't need kindness of heart, do they?"

I stopped walking and looked at him with a warm feeling of deep sympathy and thankfulness. I had felt so despondent and lonely in the officers' mess, and now I saw that I had not been so alone as I thought.

"Thank you," I repeated. "But now tell me, who is the Captain who took it so fiercely?"

"Captain Fey, you mean? Oh, he is quite all right. You see, he is a hero. He claims the Order of Maria Theresia, I don't know for what, but he is undoubtedly a gallant soldier, ruthless as a tiger, narrow-minded as a bull, vain as a peacock, ambitious as Ludendorff himself, though not so intelligent. All the same,

he is a good comrade, who would share his last bottle of brandy with you or any of the men of his company. But to hell with Fey! Tell me what you think about the assassination," he went on eagerly. "Why did Adler shoot that man Stürgkh?"

"I'm still so dumbfounded and confused that I can't figure it out," I answered. "One thing's certain, though. Stürgkh was one of the chief culprits of the war. . . . But still, to think that he could have done it—it's strange," I added.

"Strange? Why? You mean that there's some contradiction in his character?" he asked. "What do you know about his personality?"

"I've seen him only once, for a few minutes, just before I left for the front in the beginning of August 1914. I've read everything he has ever published, but I met him only once."

"Yes, but what were your impressions? How does he look?" Freistadt asked.

I hesitated for a while before answering, then I told him what my strongest impression of Adler was.

"It is remarkable and very rare, but it is true: he has the eyes of a child—big, blue, luminous eyes such as I have seldom seen," I said. "It's so strange that a man with eyes like that could go out and kill a man. You must also remember that he is not a 'hero' in your sense, but a scholar and philosopher, and a man, so far as I know him, with a great heart."

"How, then, do you explain his action?"

"I still can't see clearly why he did it. One thing's obvious to me, and that is that he wanted to punish those guilty for the death of millions. Perhaps he also thought his deed might bring the war to an end; it might be that he intended to instigate the workers to resist the war by action. But perhaps there were other reasons which I don't know. Really you must let me think it over for a while," I implored him.

"I see, I see," he repeated, a little embarrassed. "I should like you to meet Robert Ungar. He is a fine fellow, I bet you'll like him. I'm with him on 'Gibraltar'. Where's your place?"

"On the 'Tiger'."

"Well, I'll bring him along to-morrow after lunch. Okay?"

"Fine!" I said, and off he went.

When I was alone, I meditated long on the meaning of Adler's deed. There was first the apparent contradiction of his character which puzzled me. I did not have the faintest doubt that Friedrich Adler had acted with the deep conviction that he had to act and that his action was right. All the articles which he had published during the war testified to the lucidity of his mind and to the profoundness of his morality.

I was sure he saw clearly what he was going to do and that he foresaw the consequences of his action. He could not have acted in a temporary fit of passion; that I considered beyond question. He must have deliberately chosen this course, and he must have known that it would lead to the gallows.

I began to think of the consequences of disgrace connected with his deed. Though I knew the truth of Belby Porteus' lines:

"One murder made a villain,  
Millions a hero",

none the less it seemed a revolting idea that Friedrich Adler could be vilified as a "murderer" at a time when there was a reflection of blood on everyone's lips and when wholesale slaughter was lauded as a high virtue from every pulpit of the Church. The Cardinal-Archbishop of Vienna, His Eminence Piffl, preaching at the beginning of the war in St. Stephen's Cathedral beneath a huge wooden cross on which the image of Jesus Christ was nailed, assured Christendom that "It is the voice of God which speaks through the roar of the guns". Well, if killing in conflict between nations is regarded as worthy of highest praise, then the elimination of a man who has brought upon humanity unspeakable misery (and who was responsible for its continuation) cannot be wrong. Political assassination, for whatever reason, is to my mind always unjustified; but if it ever could be justified, it would be the assassination of a man whose continuing living brings untold disaster on millions of human beings. For instance, if, say, Hitler could have been assassinated early in 1939, when his intention to plunge the world into war was already clear, it would have been to the benefit of humanity. In 1914, it was Stürgkh who plunged the world into war.

What I knew of Adler was sufficient to exclude any serious doubt about the pure and noble motives of his deed. He was bestowed with almost everything life can offer: a broad mind, a scholarly intelligence and burning interests in many cultural domains. His father, deeply respected by his political opponents no less than by his fellows, was one of the great sages to have emerged from Austria. Friedrich Adler knew that the lamp of his life would be extinguished and that the darkness of death would descend upon him; and he also knew that he would bring pain and despair to his old father and mother, and his wife and children. Clearly he must have been confronted, I concluded, with a truly tragic conflict when he resolved to do what appeared to him of greater importance than everything precious to him.

What was the nature of this conflict which imperatively demanded his self-sacrifice? I strained my memory to the utmost in

recollecting the essays which he had written during the war, in order to find the clue to the enigma.

The general impression I received from his writings was the thesis that Socialism had no stake in the war. The Socialists had not the power to prevent the war. And as the workers, under the conditions of the capitalist order of society, are compelled, on penalty of starvation, to work for the benefit of the capitalist classes, so the workers, under the conditions of the imperialist order of society, are compelled, on penalty of death, to fight and to die as soldiers for the aims and purposes of the ruling classes. It is further true, he said, that if a country is once embroiled in a war and threatened by invasion and conquest, then it is natural that the people of the menaced country want to be protected; the right of defence against foreign occupation and domination is self-evident.

But Socialists ought to see, Adler urged, that, although the workers are forced to fight for their survival in the war, the war in itself remains, by virtue of its origin and its aims, an imperialist war, springing from the antagonisms between various rival imperialisms.

It follows from this fact that, although the workers as soldiers must fight in the field, the workers as Socialists must refuse at home any responsibility for the war and its prosecution.

Adler blamed the Socialist Parties not for having failed in preventing the war—the prevention of war was beyond their strength \*—he blamed the Socialist Parties for having surrendered the identity of the Socialist movement; they were not only content with accepting the war as *vis major*, but they accepted the war as the basis of their policy. They identified themselves with the national aims of their capitalist-imperialist rulers, and substituted for the international solidarity of the working classes of all countries the national solidarity of all classes in their own

\* It should be remembered that in 1914, out of the eight Great Powers which were involved in the war, in three (Great Britain, United States and Japan) there was no Socialist mass movement; in France, Italy and Austro-Hungary the Socialists were a small minority of the population; and in Russia the Socialist influence was insignificant until Czarism was overthrown. Only in Germany was there a strong Socialist movement, but though it was supported by over a third of the electorate, it was helpless in face of the majority of the German people and the formidable machinery of State. In July 1914 the Socialists were in power in none of these eight countries, and none of the eight governments of the Great Powers was dependent on the Socialists. The German historian Arthur Rosenberg, pointing to these facts, arrives at the conclusion that "even if the Social-Democratic Movement in every one of the countries of these eight Great Powers had been led by heroic revolutionaries, the war would have broken out".—Arthur Rosenberg, *Geschichte des Bolschewismus*.

von Marx bis zur Gegenwart, 1932, p. 71.

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country. They excused their participation in the war effort of their governments on the grounds of the need not only to stave off defeat from their own country, but also to ensure its victory. But as victory on one side means defeat on the other, they were endeavouring to inflict on other countries the same calamity against which they wanted to protect their own. And as the patriotic Socialists in every belligerent country justified their policy by the argument that it would be the working class which would have to suffer most in the event of defeat, they were, thus, striving to inflict on the working class of other countries these same sufferings.'

This policy, Adler insisted, violates the spirit and principles of Socialist internationalism. In this war of imperialist rivalries, victory for one's own country and defeat for the other cannot be a Socialist war aim. The aim of international Socialists ought to be: neither victors nor vanquished.

Friedrich Adler worked out his political conception in an analysis of the war policy of the German, Austrian and French Socialist Parties and in the discussion of a number of books by Socialist patriots.\* The essays were restrained in language (Adler had to write under a stringent censorship), well-balanced in judgment and convincing in argument. But I remembered how deeply I was struck, when reading his articles, by one or two occasional expressions through which shone something of the sacred flame of a noble passion; for example, when he wrote (in October 1914): "In these days, when so many all over the world grieve for those they have lost in the war, we should more than ever remember that there is something in life which is more precious than the mortal body; it is the character". I felt that beneath his sober political reasoning a great moral issue was hidden.

Seven months had to pass before the real motives of Adler's deed were revealed. The tide of events during these seven months had completely changed the political and psychological atmosphere in Austria. Adler's pistol-shots had excited the workers; the outbreak of the Russian Revolution, in March 1917, had re-awakened their old Socialist fighting spirit; the war of attrition had increased the war weariness of the people. The old Emperor Francis Joseph had died a few weeks after the assassination and the new Emperor Charles attempted to appease the universal discontent with a limited relaxation of the reign of absolutism; he convened the Parliament for the end of May, 1917.

\* Friedrich Adler's essays which appeared mainly in *Der Kampf* were published by Robert Danneberg, while Adler was in prison, at the beginning of 1918, under the title: *Die Erneuerung der Internationale*.

A fortnight before Parliament assembled, Friedrich Adler appeared before his judges in court.

To my mind the trial of Friedrich Adler showed one of the most remarkable human endeavours to live up to the faith; it should occupy a shining place among the great political trials in the history of mankind.\*

Adler spoke for six hours. He stated at the very beginning that it was not his intention to defend himself; he wanted solely to explain his deed. "I carried it out in perfect awareness that it would bring my life to a close; when I entered this prison, I knew I should not leave it alive," he said.

Then he explained why he did what he had done. He had not entertained a special hatred of Count Stürgkh. "Stürgkh embodied the system of absolutism and oppression under which we had to live in Austria; he had to be fought grimly; he had to be removed. But he was a personality, and I respected him," he said. However, when he resolved, two years earlier, to carry out an action which by its nature would compel the attention of the workers and perhaps bring them to their senses, he had no particular person in mind; Stürgkh was merely an accidental choice.

He further explained that, although he wanted by his action to protest against the continuation of the imperialist war and to urge its ending in a peace "without victors and vanquished", this was not the main motive of his deed.

What he really wanted was to protest against the betrayal of the spirit, against the habit of mendacity and insincerity which had corrupted the very soul of the Socialist movement since the moment it joined the camp of the patriots everywhere. Many leading Socialists, who had ceased to be real Socialists because they had become nationalists, endeavoured to snare the simple principles of international Socialism in the cobwebs of sophistry and attempted to reconcile the aims of the imperialist *bourgeois* with the idea of the working class.

What is the idea of the working class? It is, Adler set out to show, the idea of the unity of mankind as expressed in the conception of international Socialism. "I'm speaking here quietly about mankind," he said, "although I know that the Austrian war propaganda is working very hard to persuade the people that the conception of humanity is a lie of the *Entente*. But we Social Democrats have accepted this conception most seriously; it is the idea and the purpose of humanity which sanctifies the class struggle of the working classes and which elevates it far above any

\* The proceedings of this trial and the protocol of the preliminary examination were published under the title: *Friedrich Adler, Vor dem Ausnahmegericht.*

struggle in the world. It is this very idea of humanity which has been betrayed by the Socialist patriots everywhere."

Adler fought this betrayal, he told his judges, from the beginning of the war. It was a truly tragic fight, for he had to fight in the first place against his own father as the leader of the Austrian Socialists. He not only loved his father most tenderly as a son, but he also respected him most affectionately "as an example of a perfect Socialist; my father was my best friend in life and nearer to my heart than anyone in the world," Adler said.

Yet he had to fight him. He told the court how profoundly impressed and moved he was when still at the secondary school by "the holy word of the Scripture that the gravest sin, for which there is no forgiveness, is the sin against the spirit", and he added: "Everything I did during the war, from the beginning up to the end, was an expression of my revolt against this sin".

It could be asked, and indeed Adler was asked by his judges in the court, how he was able to reconcile his moral standard with the carrying out of such an action as murder, which is generally regarded as immoral.

This was Adler's answer:

"Yes," he said, "I admit I always held that the killing of human beings is subhuman. War is subhuman and revolution is subhuman. So long as it is necessary to kill men instead of developing humanity through the spirit, so long do we live in a barbaric, subhuman age.

"We Socialists hate murder; we strive, as Marx had hoped, 'for a new society which knows in its domestic affairs only work, and in its foreign affairs only peace'.

"And yet," Adler continued, "while we long for a society which knows no murder and violence, we do not deceive ourselves by believing that this society is already in existence. To kill and to be killed in war is still regarded as a virtue. But if war is morally justified, then revolution is morally justified too.

"There are two great philosophical thoughts in eternal struggle with each other, which have troubled me since my youth," Adler went on. "The one is the philosophy of Christianity; it says: 'Thou shalt not kill'. The other is the philosophy of expediency; it says: 'Thou shalt kill under certain circumstances'.

"When German troops invaded Belgium and killed innocent women and children, we were told: 'There is nothing you can do, there is a war on'. When the *Lusitania* was sunk and many innocent civilians were drowned, we were told: 'There is nothing you can do, there is a war on'. When men in their tens of thousands were sent to certain death at the front, we were told: 'There is nothing you can do, there is a war on'. While we still live in an



age of barbarity which recognises the necessity to kill and to be killed, while the age of humanity has still not arrived, then murder must not be a privilege of the rulers; then force shall at least serve the idea of humanity."

Friedrich Adler then described in an exciting narration how he attempted time and time again to persuade the leaders of the Party to return to the moral standard of international Socialism; it was of no avail; they did not listen to him; they refused to reconsider the problem.

Adler refused to submit to the tyranny of despair. "I resolved," he said, "to urge them to think by other means." So he planned the attempt on Stürgkh's life and carried it out.

"I naturally do not know the measure of its effect. But I have never regretted what I did; I was and still am convinced that it was useful, and that I had done what one can do with one's life, and I am content with having consumed my life in this way," he concluded.

This mood of content came over him immediately after he had carried out his deed. In the very first letter he was allowed to write in prison, a week after he had been arrested, he wrote to his wife Katia (the letter was read during the trial): "I live in a state of calmness of soul and inner contentment such as I have experienced seldom in my life and certainly never during the war. I'm reading with utter delight Riehl's *Der philosophische Kritizismus* (you should read it) and *Faust* and *Hamlet*. . . ."

Adler's speech before the court was reported in full on many pages by the *Arbeiter Zeitung*. Its moral effect was tremendous. From it emerged an uncompromising figure, tearing aside all constructions of compromise and of excuse, a man of ultimate selflessness, passionately devoted to the pure idea, a man, moreover, who had entered the hidden shrine of the faith and who, though seeing that all the moral foundations of the idea to which he had consecrated his life were shattered, had never ceased to hope, to strive, to act.

Even those who had disapproved of his attitude, and still more of his deed, admitted now that, as error in judgment is inevitable, if he had erred he did the better thing in erring on the noble side.

But those who were worried about the distortion of Socialist thought as they had conceived it before the war were filled with profound admiration for and gratitude to the man who had articulated their doubts and qualms.

Adler's speech acted like a purge to the Austrian Socialist movement, from which it emerged purified in spirit and morale. Adler had mercilessly criticised the war policy of the Socialist leaders and the apathy of the Socialist rank and file; he had

scourged their opportunism, their cowardice, their intellectual laziness, their moral slovenliness. But he did it with a truly bleeding heart; through every word he spoke rang mortal anguish for the Paradise lost and craving anxiety for the Paradise to be regained. Every worker in the movement felt that Adler's apprehension sprang from a deep devotion and an infinite sincerity.

The speech was a powerful stimulus in the process of self-reflection on the ultimate purpose of the Socialist movement. It awakened Austrian Socialists to the conception of a new destiny. It determined the moral character of the Austrian Socialist movement for the next quarter of a century, until it was drowned in a sea of blood by a devout Catholic.\*

I do not know whether Adler's speech became known in England and France; I only know that the Petersburg Workers' and Soldiers' Council conferred upon Adler at one of their first meetings honorary membership, and that when the revolution liberated him from prison the Soviet Ambassador Rakovsky, the Social Democratic Parliamentary Party of Holland, the leader of the Serb Socialists, Kazlerowitsch, and the Parliamentary group of the German Independent Socialists sent telegrams of congratulation.

Adler was sentenced to death by hanging. But in the face of the workers' militant spirit which his speech produced the Government did not dare to execute the sentence; it was commuted to seventeen years imprisonment.

Before the sentence was announced by the President of the Court, Adler asked leave to say a few more words, "the last I shall speak in my life".

"I do not know," he said, "whether I shall die soon or be damned to endless decay. If the sentence of death which the court is now going to formulate should be carried out, I have but one desire: to preserve the strength of my mind to the last moment, and to die upright and erect, as befits a revolutionary.

"Yet all whom I loved and all whose love was the happiness of my life, and all my friends wherever they may be, I want them to remember the profound and pure truth of the Easter Message from the Tomb:

'Not all are dead who are buried,  
For they cannot, Oh brothers, extinguish the spirit!'

\* Bundeskanzler Dollfuss, who had been given the Order of the Golden Rose by the Pope a few weeks before he crushed the Socialist Party in February 1934, was mainly assisted by that Captain Fey whose death's-head I had seen at Natiesta's table.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### THE FIRST RAYS

"Forgot are wars, wiped out for ever  
Their trails of blood, their harms, their rage."

—Alexander Blok, *Ravenna*.

THE WAR dragged on with no prospect of peace. The Russian March Revolution had been a powerful clarion call. The Czarist régime was overthrown, and Workers' and Soldiers' Councils wielded much power in the State. But the decision of war or peace rested not alone with the Russian Government, but as much with the Government of her Allies and, above all, with the imperialist Governments of Germany and Austria.

The Workers' and Soldiers' Councils proclaimed as their war aims a "peace without victors and vanquished, without annexations and reparations". But most Socialists held that, while the Russian Government ought to bring pressure to bear upon the British and French Governments in favour of these peace aims, Russia must not desert the French and British democracies by concluding a separate peace with Germany, because then German militarism, released from the burden of an eastern front, might conquer the whole of Europe.

But it did not seem likely that the British and French Governments were prepared to accept a peace "without annexations and reparations", and still less did the German Government seem willing to relinquish their imperialist designs. So the war dragged on.

The skimpy, unreliable news which reached Austria about the events in Russia indicated the increasing vehemence of the struggle between the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks on the one side, and the Bolsheviks on the other, a struggle which seemed to paralyse the Revolution and disrupt the country. I, for one, did not quite understand the real significance of this internal struggle, as I was then 1000 miles from Vienna, serving with a shore battery at the naval port of Cattaro in Southern Dalmatia.

One day in November we learned that the Bolsheviks had seized power. Soon afterwards we were stirred by a mighty appeal, issued by the Bolshevik Government; to "All, All, All Peoples of the World", calling on them to conclude peace now.

without any further delay, on the basis of "no annexations and reparations". At that moment every Socialist not familiar with the internal differences between the two schools of Russian Socialism was a Bolshevik in his heart.

My enthusiasm for the Bolsheviks grew all the stronger as it became known that as soon as they got into power they had made good their promises given during their struggle for power. They had promised land for the poor peasants; and the poor peasants got the land of the nobility. They had promised peace; and they immediately offered peace.

The Entente Governments appeared definitely unwilling to accept the Bolshevik suggestions. The Bolsheviks resolved to negotiate a separate peace with Germany and Austria-Hungary. Both these countries were dominated by imperialist Governments. What were the prospects of negotiating with them?

The Bolsheviks were certainly not mistaken about the true nature of imperialist Germany and Austria. But they apparently assumed that the working classes of both those empires would swiftly follow the Russian example and would turn the war against foreign nations into a war against their own oppressors. They hoped that the peace negotiations would kindle revolutions in the belligerent countries. They insisted, therefore, on public negotiations, a demand which the German Government conceded.

So the world witnessed the peace negotiations at Brest-Litovsk, conducted on the Russian side by Trotsky with a straightforwardness and brilliance which aroused the admiration of Socialists everywhere.

But, though Trotsky's speeches impressed the workers, they naturally did not impress the German imperialists. General Hoffmann, spokesman of the German High Command, reminded Trotsky that Russia was defeated and Germany was her conqueror, and that Germany had no particular liking for a peace "without victors and vanquished". He suggested to Russia terms which would not only cost her Poland, Finland and the Baltic Provinces, but also the whole of the Ukraine, Russia's granary and her most important source of coal, and the Caucasus, Russia's most important source of oil. The Russian Revolution had accepted the principle of national self-determination and had recognised it for Poland, Finland and the Baltic peoples. Yet the German imperialists wanted not the "liberation" of these nations, but the incorporation of their lands in the orbit of the German Empire. Were Russia to lose Poland, the Ukraine and the Caucasus she would for generations to come lose every

means of working her way towards prosperity and civilisation; the Revolution would be doomed.

In the face of this mortal danger, Trotsky carried through what he had intended from the outset. He went over the heads of the representatives of the imperialist Governments, as they sat round the table in a humble building in Brest-Litovsk, and appealed to the people themselves, toiling in the factories and mines of Germany, Austria and Hungary.

His appeal was not entirely in vain. The Austrian workers responded with strong action. General Hoffmann made his threatening statement on January 12. On the next day the Viennese Socialists shouted their protest at mass meetings. Two days later the ammunition workers of Wiener Neustadt started a terrific wave of strikes which spread from the industrial centres of Lower Austria to Vienna, Upper Austria, Styria and Hungary. In a manifesto, issued by the Party Executive on January 16, it was stated that the people refused "to continue the war against Russia for the purpose of electing the Emperor of Austria King of Poland and of helping the King of Prussia to gain military and economic domination over Latvia and Lithuania". The manifesto appealed to the workers "to raise their voices for the speedy termination of the war, for a peace without open or covert conquests, a peace based on the genuine right of self-determination of the nations". And to emphasise the revolutionary character of the movement, the Austrian workers formed, for the first time, Workers' Councils in the shops.

The strike movement, though inspired by a truly revolutionary passion, did not and could not lead to a revolutionary uprising.

I happened to be in Vienna for a short leave during the last days of the strike. There I met Otto Bauer, whom I had not seen since the war began. He had been captured by the Russians as early as December 1914 and had been detained since then in a Siberian prison camp. After the outbreak of the Revolution his Socialist friends in St. Petersburg ensured his release, and he went home in September 1917.

I found Otto Bauer most sceptical about the scope of the strike movement. He thought that it could not reach its real aim unless it went on to a revolutionary insurrection.

"With strikes alone you can't compel an imperialist government to sign revolutionary peace proposals; you must overthrow it. But you are able to overthrow it only by force," he said. "Do you believe that we possess the power for blowing up the Government?" he asked.

"Trotsky's great mistake," he continued, "is to assume that our army and the German army are in the same state of disinte-

gration as the Russian army was after its defeat in July. You know that our army, let alone the German, has not yet disintegrated; it is still a formidable instrument in the hands of the Government. They have thrown into the strike areas whole divisions of Rumanian, Ruthenian and Bosnian troops, young, frightened soldiers, who do not understand the language of the striking workers and who obey their officers blindly. But you cannot have a revolutionary insurrection as long as tens of thousands of soldiers are prepared to shoot down workers. No one knows that better than Trotsky; the Bolsheviks would never have been able to seize power had not Kerensky lost his grip on the army.

"And then we would have to fight not only the ruling classes of Austria, but also the ruling classes of Germany," he said. "German imperialism is now at the climax of its power. The Russian army has ceased to be a force to be reckoned with; so the German High Command is able to spare enough troops to quell a revolutionary rising in Austria. It would not hesitate for a moment to invade our country, with or without the consent of the Austrian Government. And as a revolution in Austria would inevitably disintegrate our front in Italy, the Entente armies would advance from the south through Austria, and our country would become a battlefield on which the German and Entente forces would meet.

"Certainly," he concluded, "the situation would be different if Germany were also shaken by a revolutionary rising. But that is not the case so far."

Indeed, while the strike movement in Austria was in progress, Germany remained apparently quiet. This calmness was not to last very long. For when the news about the strikes in Austria filtered into Germany, in spite of the most severe censorship of the German Government, the German workers also rose. The strikes began in Berlin, and spread from there to Kiel, Hamburg, Mannheim, Leipzig, Brunswick, Breslau, Nuremberg, Magdeburg, Halle, Bochum and Dortmund. But the impetus was lost because the German workers began their strikes about a week after the Austrian workers had returned to their shops. The January strikes were not a concerted action of the Austrian and German Socialist Parties; they were not planned and prepared by a central body; they were spontaneous movements of the workers, generated by a sudden reduction of the bread rations, and inflamed by the insolent attitude of the German militarists at Brest-Litovsk. So, after the Austrian Government had succeeded in beguiling the workers with the promise of an increase of the bread ration and a "just" peace, the German

Government succeeded a fortnight later in breaking up the strikes by force.

But although the strikes could not bring about a revolution, the air was filled with revolutionary spirit. How different had become the mood of the Party, and, above all, the tone of the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, since my last leave! It had, in fact, changed since Friedrich Adler's speech in the court; it became all the more outspoken in its fight against Austrian and German imperialism after the Russian March Revolution. Friedrich Austerlitz, the author of the article, *Der Tag der deutschen Nation*, now made a resolute stand against the nationalist German Majority Socialists. When I mentioned to him during this leave that I now liked the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, he explained why he could not have written in the same way in 1914 as he was now doing in 1918.

"You have apparently never understood the real magnitude of the menace with which we were faced at the beginning of the war," he said reproachfully. "You have seen only the imperialist side of the war, and you wanted us to wait and see and say that this is not our war. But have you ever given a moment's thought to what would have happened if the Russians had defeated us? You were in Cracow when the Russians besieged it, and you know it was a sheer miracle that they did not take it. Remember that the Russians had put one and half a million men in the field to our half million while the German armies were in Belgium and France. If they had taken Cracow they would have occupied Vienna; they would have conquered Bohemia, and would have set up a Bohemian Kingdom with a Russian grand duke as King; they would have conquered the Balkans, and would have made Czarist satellite States of them. The whole of Eastern Europe stretching up to the gates of Vienna and Nuremberg would have become Cossack. That I had to consider." And he added: "I was in the right."

I felt that he had not been quite in the right, for a thousand and one reasons, but I had to admit that that was past now, that a new morning was dawning and that Austerlitz was again its herald.

When I went back to Cattaro the strikes in Austria were not yet called off and the strikes in Germany had not yet broken out. Although I did not expect an imminent revolutionary development, after all Otto Bauer had told me, I returned to my guns on the shores of the Adriatic with a feeling that the revolution was now on the move. Very soon this feeling was enhanced by a great new experience.

One morning, less than a fortnight after I had returned,

I was walking along the beach near our gun position at Lastva with my comrade Walter Schwarzacher, when I thought I saw a strange movement among the warships in the port. Nearly half of the Austrian Navy was in the Bocche di Cattaro. Most of the vessels lay about half a mile offshore. I had never seen any of them move before. Now one of the cruisers was moving slowly, while the sirens of the other ships and their heliographs worked furiously in the glaring sun.

Half an hour or so later our battery commander received a 'phone order from the group commander to get the battery ready to fight and to dispatch an officer to headquarters for special instructions. As I was on duty, I had to go to headquarters at Teodo, and there I learned that the whole fleet stationed at Cattaro, forty warships in all, had mutinied in the morning (February 1, 1918). The crews had hoisted red flags, had arrested the commanding Admiral on the flagship *Georg* together with all the naval officers, and had detained them on the ships. A Sailors' Council had taken over the command of the fleet. The order for our battery was to open fire without warning on the battleship *Monarch* (which lay nearest to our guns) should it move. We were further informed that the whole port was declared a banned zone for mail and travel until further notice.

I now found out what it means to be caught in the wheels of the war machine. With every fibre of my being I was with the ratings of the red ships. But to join the mutiny as an individual was technically difficult, as I would have to be ferried by boat from the heavily guarded shores to one of the red ships, and as I would probably have been received by the men with suspicion. To attempt to induce the crew of my battery to join the mutiny, as my friend Schwarzacher suggested, was hopeless, because there was not the faintest indication that any of them would be willing to risk their necks for a revolutionary action. Most of them were Hungarian or Slovenian peasants, who scarcely understood German. Their life was not hard, they were fairly well fed, and scarcely any of them showed any political interest.

The only thing we could do was to take care that our shells would not hit the battleship if we were compelled to fire. That could easily be arranged, as our commander, though a fervent patriot and eager to win laurels which he had missed hitherto, was astonishingly ignorant of artillery operations and entirely dependent on Schwarzacher (who was second in command). When our commander, in a state of great excitement and alarm, asked both of us to do our best, Schwarzacher assured him that



it would be all right if only he would leave the business to us. So my friend took over the command, and I assisted him.

We both watched what was happening on the *Monarch* through our telescopes from the slope of a hill. It did not move, though clouds of heavy smoke rose from the stack, indicating that it was under steam. On the quarter-deck a meeting of the sailors and the ratings crowded round him, standing between the guns, sitting on the barrels and clinging to the rope ladders hanging from the masts. On the fore-deck naval officers, guarded by ratings, paced restlessly up and down. From the stern mast a red flag waved in the breeze. I imagined the Russian battleship *Potemkin* in the first hours after its mutiny at Odessa must have looked like that.

I wondered whether the fleet would act in the same way as the *Potemkin* had. The mutinous fleet, I reflected, would have to leave the port that night under the protection of darkness, otherwise it would be lost, surrounded as it was by many shore batteries and the heavy guns of the fortresses on the hills above. Only if the fleet was on the open sea would it be free to bring pressure upon the Government.

We were on duty the whole night, and when the morning dawned we saw with dismay that the ships had not left, nor had the sailors attempted to make contact with the forces ashore. They remained completely isolated.

Meanwhile we learned something about the issue of the mutiny. It was caused, like the mutiny on the *Potemkin*, by bad food and harsh treatment. But this initial impulse to protest widened immediately and became political. Thus the red sailors demanded the ending of the war by peace negotiations on the basis of Wilson's Fourteen Points and the Bolshevik peace proposals, and democratic forms of governments in Austria and Hungary.

The Sailors' Council asked to be received by the Commander of the War Port, General von Guscek. He refused to see them, as was to be expected. He ordered help from the ships stationed in Pola. Next morning he issued an ultimatum of unconditional surrender to terminate at 3.30 p.m. Part of the fleet, one of the cruisers and torpedo boats, headed by the *Novarra* (of which the Horthy, who later became dictator of Hungary, was then in command), broke away from the phalanx of the red ships. But the battleship and the other cruisers and gunboats still kept the red flag hoisted. General von Guscek issued another ultimatum on February 3, terminating at 10 a.m. In the meantime the Third Naval Division arrived outside the port from Pola,

and the German U-boats, stationed at Cattaro and operating in the Mediterranean, having been recalled, patrolled inside the harbour, ready to strike. The red sailors hesitated to fight, though the fortresses Spaniola and Cobila had opened fire on the *Crown Prince Rudolf*; so the mutiny collapsed. The rest of the fleet surrendered.

The Bocche di Cattaro is an immense bay, divided by a small channel, called Catenn, between the outer and the inner port. The vessels which had capitulated were commanded to move through the Catenn into the inner port of Cattaro, along a line of German U-boats. When reaching the Caterin, they had to haul down the red flag. Our gun position was at the entrance of the Catenn, and so I could watch this distressing ceremony of defeat, and I watched it with helpless rage.

On the same afternoon about 800 sailors, roped together in groups, were driven through the street to the fortress of Cattaro and a few days later tried by martial law. For a beginning, four of the so-called ring-leaders were shot, and many more red sailors were threatened with execution.

It was, I felt, of the greatest urgency to get in touch at once with the Party's headquarters in Vienna. What I had seen and learned about the mutiny I had noted down, and Schwarzacher eagerly went all over the port, and even to the headquarters of the Port Commander and the office of the martial court, collecting information and documents.

Walter Schwarzacher was a student of biology at the University of Graz, a stronghold of rabid German nationalism. His father was a civil servant of high rank and also a German nationalist. No wonder that Walter, though not strongly politically minded, was a nationalist too, despising the international Socialists. Yet, when I explained to him in many talks we had the idea of Socialism, and when I showed him that its principles were derived from those ethical ideas of the German classics so dear to him, his sympathy for Socialism awoke. He now made the cause of the red sailors his own. The problem was how to dispatch the report I had written for the Party to Vienna without delay. Again Walter found the means. The office of the Port Commander used to send a courier every day to the Commanding General of Bosnia, Herzegovina and Dalmatia, stationed at Sarajevo; artillery officers of the shore batteries were assigned to this service in turn. Walter managed to get the job for me a few days after the collapse of the mutiny. So I brought my report in the courier bag to Sarajevo, where I asked the courier for the headquarters at Vienna to post it there to my wife. On February 11, the report was in the hands of Otto Bauer. After he had read it

he said to my wife, "What a misfortune that Cattaro is not our Kronstadt—a mutiny a thousand miles away from Vienna cannot succeed."

The same night Victor Adler went with Karl Seitz to the War Minister, General Stöger-Steiner. Seitz afterwards described to me the interview in every detail. Adler told the Minister everything I had reported. When, at the beginning of the conversation, he mentioned the mutiny, Stöger-Steiner went pale and interrupted Adler, "Where did *you* get that news?"

"Never mind where I got the news," Adler replied. "What matters only is whether it is true or not, and whether four sailors have been shot and another forty-three are about to be shot, and whether about another eight hundred are to be court-martialled. Is this true?" Adler asked.

"Yes, it is true, I should say, on the whole it is true," the General answered hesitatingly. "But really, my dear Doctor, this is a dead secret, and not a word must be known about it."

"Do you really think that I would keep quiet while you shoot these men?" Adler said angrily. "The slaughter has to be stopped at once, otherwise the whole ammunition industry will stop."

"What do you mean," the General asked, frightened. "Do you mean to call a strike?"

"That will not be necessary," Adler answered icily. "I'm just going to tell the workers about what has happened, and what is going to happen, at Cattaro; the rest I leave confidently to them."

The discussion ended with a solemn promise given by the War Minister to prohibit further executions and to treat the "affair" of Cattaro more discreetly. A few days later I received a communication from Seitz, asking me to find a counsel for the accused red sailors, and putting 5000 Kronen for this purpose at my disposal. I succeeded in obtaining the most devoted services of Dr. Mitrovitz, a lawyer of Cattaro. Indeed, while many more sailors were tried and sentenced to prison (for the duration), no more were executed. A few months later, when Parliament assembled, Michael Schacherl, a Socialist deputy, revealed the whole story. The Czech Socialist deputy Soukoup came down to Cattaro to discuss the case with Dr. Mitrovitz and me and to look after the detained men.

Within three weeks, from January 14 to February 4, 1918, about one million workers had struck in Austria, as many in Germany, and tens of thousands in Hungary; these strikes were followed by a strike of the arsenal workers of Pola, a mutiny

of Slovenian soldiers in Judenburg, of Serb soldiers in Fünfkirchen, of Czech soldiers in Rumburg, of Hungarian soldiers in Budapest (about which I learned only many months later); and then the fleet of Cattaro mutinied.

These were the first large-scale revolts of the peoples in the Hapsburg and Hohenzollern empires. They formed a most powerful peace demonstration. All who struck in the factories and revolted in the forces had the common desire to end the war at once. All were indignant at the demands of the German and Austrian imperialists upon the Russian Revolution at Brest-Litovsk. It was no less impressive a demonstration for democracy, because all who rose in these three weeks had a common desire to do away with German militarism and Austrian absolutism.

The rebellious Slavs of Austria interpreted democracy in Wilson's terms of national self-determination. Together with the German-Austrian Socialists, they aimed at the overthrow of Hapsburg absolutism. But they went farther. It became clear that they would no longer be content with the transformation of the Hapsburg Empire into a democratic federation of nations. They wanted to break up this multi-national empire and to form independent nation-States of their own.

When the German Socialist movement in Austria was revived by Victor Adler in 1889, it visualised the future of Austria as a democratic federative State of the ten Austro-Hungarian nations. The multi-national State was accepted as a historic fact. Its disintegration was considered a disaster, because the small Slav States emerging from the ruins of the Hapsburg Empire would have inevitably become Russian satellites. It should be remembered that until the March Revolution in 1917 Russia was the most reactionary power in Europe. The break-up of the Hapsburg Empire would have extended and strengthened the barbaric Empire of the Romanoffs.

With this argument the Austrian Socialist patriots excused their war policy from 1914 onwards. Their spokesman was Karl Renner, my teacher at the Arbeiterschule, who became the first Prime Minister of the Austrian Republic in 1918. Long before the war, in a scholarly book, *Die Grundlagen und Entwicklungsziele der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie*, he had suggested an alliance between the "anational" Hapsburg dynasty and the international working class for the purpose of the transformation of the centralist-absolutist Empire into a democratic national federative State, to be imposed upon the nationalist *bourgeois* of the German, Czech and Hungarian Austrians. He propagated this idea during the war in many articles, published in the *Arbeiter Zeitung* and

*Der Kampf*. \* He considered (like Acton) the multi-national State a higher form of social organisation than the nation-State; he regarded the aims of the Slav Austrian nations towards independent nation-States of their own as a "reactionary Utopia"; he interpreted Naumann's idea of integrating all the nations living in the centre of Europe between the North Sea and the Mediterranean into the empire *Mittleuropa* as the "revolutionary idea of 1914".

But the Hapsburg dynasty was neither able nor willing at any time to federate its Empire, as the unavailing struggle of the Austrian Socialists had proved. The Austrian Slav nations, which might perhaps have accepted the reconstitution of the Hapsburg Empire on a democratic federative basis in 1905, were definitely unwilling to accept it now, during the war, as the Hapsburgs' defeat appeared inevitable; they were now resolved to break away from the Hapsburg Monarchy.

When Otto Bauer returned from Russia in autumn 1917, he felt that the war would be followed by national revolutions of the Czech, Polish and Southern Slavs. He foresaw that these revolutions would inevitably break up the Hapsburg Empire. He was concerned with the problem of what ought to be the policy of the German-Austrian Socialists. He suggested that the German Socialists in Austria should recognise the right of self-determination of the Austrian Slav nations and their claim to found nation-States of their own, and he claimed in return for the remaining German Austrians the right to unite in a German Republic.

The united German Republic had been the supreme aim of the German Left in the revolution of 1848; this idea was the legacy of Marx and Engels, of August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, a legacy dear to Victor Adler and Engelbert Pernerstorfer. It could not be realised until the Hapsburg Empire was broken up. The break-up of the Hapsburg Empire was, however, undesirable from a progressive point of view so long as Russia was a counter-revolutionary Power.

Now the Russian Revolution had destroyed feudal Russia. Now the disintegration of the Hapsburg Empire appeared no longer a retrogressive move in the development of history. Otto Bauer, in reviving the idea of German unity, became the executor of the legacy of 1848. He demanded (as early as 1917) the formation of Slav nation-States; but at the same time he urged the *Anschluss* of the German Austrians to the German

\* These articles and some others were published in three of his books: *Österreichs Erneuerung*; *Marxismus, Krieg und Internationale*; and *Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Nationen*.

Republic as he visualised it. He formulated this concept in a programme, which became the basis of the policy for the German Socialists in Austria during the last months of the war.\*

Although the strikes and mutinies had not achieved their aims, no Socialist doubted that we should soon see the country flooded with waves of new strikes and new mutinies which, in the end, would lead to the revolution. It was most interesting to observe in the mess of our group commander, where officers of many batteries met, the change of mood. Only the hard-boiled patriots still pinned their hopes on Ludendorff's forthcoming offensive; he had transferred something like a million men from the Eastern front to the Western, and now, they said, he will break through. But most of the officers were extremely sceptical, and some of them toyed with the idea of a Socialist Government appointed by the Emperor, to conclude peace at any price before it was too late.

I was very impatient to get home to learn what was going on. I looked anxiously round for commissions on which officers were sometimes sent to Vienna, and I succeeded in getting one at the end of July.

I wanted to see Friedrich Adler in his prison at Stein (an hour's train journey from Vienna). His father gave me permission, and so I made the pilgrimage, taking him a rucksack filled with cakes made by my wife's mother, and lots of books he wanted to read.

I had to wait in the prison director's office a few minutes till Adler came down. How surprised I was to see him healthy, unbroken, almost happy.

"Now tell me quickly how things are getting on," he said eagerly.

I understood what he meant by "things". "Things are going quite well," I assured him, and told him frankly, regardless of the presence of the prison director, what I knew about what was going on and what I thought about our immediate future. Adler listened with fervour to every word I had brought him from beyond the prison walls. It was most curious to see that the prison director, an elderly gentleman with full, rosy cheeks, did not in the least mind this seditious conversation; he even joined in, though in a little less sanguine mood than mine. But I wanted to know how Adler was getting on in the loneliness of his cell.

"Oh, believe me, quite all right," Adler reassured me. "I'm not lonely; I've never read so much in my life as I do now."

\* See Otto Bauer, *Die österreichische Revolution*, 1923, in which he describes the disintegration of the Hapsburg Empire and the rise of the Austrian nations. This book, together with his *Nationalitätenfrage*, is the most instructive Marxist analysis of the history of the nations of Central and South Europe.

I knew that he was writing a book on Einstein's theory of relativity. Although I believed what he had told me, and though I was sure that his imprisonment would last only till the day of the revolution, it was a most grievous moment when I shook his hand, saying "good-bye" to him and leaving him.

The months which followed were months of hectic expectations. Ludendorff's spring offensive had failed, Foch's summer offensive had succeeded, and after August 8 everyone knew that Germany had finally lost the war. Six weeks later General Franchet d'Esperey smashed the Bulgarian front and the inexorable doom progressed with giant strides. Everyone felt that the end of the war was now at hand. But hardly anyone was in a mood of despair, because no one feared the defeat. If Germany and Austria were to capitulate, as they would have to, then, of course, both Empires would become republics, and Austria in particular would become either a federation of republican nation-States or, if she should be broken up, the Slav nations would form their own republics and the German Austrians would join the German Republic. We had Wilson's Fourteen Points, promising freedom, democracy and self-determination for all people; we had Wilson's repeated assurance that the Entente was not waging war against the common people of Germany and Austro-Hungary, but against their dynasties and their military caste. There was not a single Socialist—and very few other common people—who did not wish with all his heart for the end of the Hapsburg and Hohenzollern dynasties and the resounding annihilation of Prussian militarism. No one doubted that the Entente would honour the word which Wilson had pledged. Why, then, fear defeat?

These were weeks and months during which I lived in a trance. Now, I felt certain, I would realise what had been the purpose of my life since the day when Robert Lackenbacher had kindled the flame of Socialism in my soul. Freedom would triumph in all the lands, from the shores of the Pacific to the shores of the Atlantic. There would no longer be Hapsburgs and Hohenzollerns, as there were no longer Romanoffs. There would no longer be militarism and imperialism. This war would end war for ever. Capitalism and imperialism had plunged humanity into the infernal abyss of this world war. We had passed through it; we had seen the tragic pictures of human woes; we had felt mortal anguish with all who had suffered. Now a new age would commence. Across the gulf of chaos which the old order of society had generated the working classes of all countries would unite in the eternal spirit of Socialist brotherhood, for "of one blood are all nations of man".

## PART III

### CHAPTER SIXTEEN

#### A WINTER OF DISCONTENT

"The claims of the Future are represented by suffering millions."—Disraeli, *Sybil*.

THE VAST Hapsburg Empire was in full disintegration. But we, on the shores of the Adriatic, hardly noticed it.

Bulgaria had surrendered on September 29. The South-Slav deputies of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had assembled at Zagreb on October 5, and had called the Yugoslav State into being. Two days later the Polish Regency Council proclaimed the Polish Republic, composed of the three parts of Poland. A week later the Czech Socialists called a general strike, and on the same day Benes informed the Allied Governments that the first Czech Government, with Masaryk as its President, had been constituted. On October 21 the German deputies of Austria assembled at Vienna and proclaimed the founding of an independent German-Austrian State.

But in our gun-position life went on as usual. Every third day I had to ride on horseback to an outpost of the port and watch the purple-blue waves of the sea, and every second day I was on duty at the gun-emplacement and had to see that the gun metal was polished. I was tired of it all; I was longing to get into the political battle-line. As there was no hope of getting ordinary leave, one day I packed my things and went away.

I arrived in Vienna on October 30. On the same day the German-Austrian deputies met for the first session of the Provisional National Assembly, while the Viennese workers went in their tens of thousands from their factories to the Diet building and shouted their demands for the proclamation of the Austrian Republic and the release of Friedrich Adler.

I went immediately to the Party's headquarters in the Rechte Wienzeile. At the gates of the building I met Julius Deutsch, one of the Party's secretaries. He was then a lieutenant, assigned to the research department of the War Ministry after he had served for a time at the front.



"Oh, I'm glad to see you," he said. "You know, we asked for you from the Ministry. Have you been recalled?" I told him that no order had arrived and I had left on my own initiative, but all the same there I was.

Deutsch told me that I might be needed for an important job. During the last months, in anticipation of the things to come, he had organised a nucleus of reliable Socialist soldiers in every barracks and in every unit of troops in Vienna; so he knew what was going on in the forces, and should an emergency arise he could count on parts of the troops.

"You see," he said, "the battle is not yet won. As a matter of fact, it hasn't even begun. Only yesterday the High Command wired urgent appeals to the troops in the field, calling on them to demonstrate in favour of the maintenance of the Monarchy and the dynasty. The Emperor may try to fight for his skin. The Party is resolved not to ignore such a challenge. In that case I would have to take over the military side of the job, and you would have to assist me."

Certainly I would, and I at once started thinking which of the governmental buildings would have to be stormed first and where barricades would have to be erected. Romantic pictures of the fighting of the Paris Commune flashed through my mind. Now it was our turn to wage the last battle for freedom.

I stayed with Deutsch half the night, talking about military and political matters, but nothing happened. Next morning the Party's Annual Conference assembled in Favoriten, and I went to attend it. When I entered the door of the big hall I saw Victor Adler, sitting alone on a chair near the entrance, leaning upon a cane. He looked old and tired. I approached him shyly, and respectfully bade him good morning. He raised his head slowly and looked at me with weary and sorrowful eyes.

"So you're back, Braunthal. I'm very glad," he said. "There will be lots to do." That was the last time I was to see him.

Twelve days later he died.

It was a great man who died. For thirty years Victor Adler had been the most venerated leader of the Austrian working class. In the 'eighties, when he began his work in the Labour movement, the Austrian workers were stricken with dire poverty, squalor and ignorance. In the brick-kilns they were still in a state of semi-serfdom; in the coal mines they still toiled underground in eleven-hour shifts; in most factories the twelve-hour day was the norm; and the children of the working-class, the boys and girls between fourteen and eighteen, were exploited fifteen and sixteen hours a day by their artisan masters. This was the time when the sledge-hammer of the industrial revolution still

battered the lower middle class, pulverised the small peasantry and produced limitless reserves of industrial manpower ready to be exploited at any price. More than ever before or since, man's labour was regarded as a commodity, the price of which was regulated by the law of the market. There was hardly any concern for the health of the workers. The phosphorus vapours in the match-factories poisoned the blood of young girls; the lead dust in the printing-shops sapped the lungs of the boys. But the responsibility of society for the protection of the workers' health was still an unknown moral commandment.

Victor Adler's voice, raised in meetings, in Parliament and in the Press, became the social conscience of his time. He accused the ruling classes of unspeakable oppression, committed out of greed, meanness and thoughtlessness. He awakened the oppressed classes to the conception of their task of liberating themselves and thereby liberating humanity from the disgrace of exploitation, poverty, squalor and ignorance.

Many workers' leaders had pursued the same aim. But none I know had spoken in Victor Adler's language, a language imbued with such profound humanity, freshness of approach and compelling wisdom. The tide of events was to him not merely the reflex of struggles of impersonal social forces; he saw behind it the living and suffering human being. Socialism was to him not merely an economic doctrine; he conceived it as a philosophy of the dignity of man. And in teaching and preaching it he awakened in the workers their sense of dignity.

He was a great political figure, a master of the art of the possible. He knew perfectly the real power relations between the various social and political forces of society at any given moment, and he exploited them to the limit for the sake of the working people. There were ten nations on the political scene, each of them split into classes and into a multitude of political and religious creeds, and each nation as a whole fought against the others. He steered the ship of the Socialist movement firmly and ingeniously through this turbulent sea of antagonisms, gaining for the working class a political and social weight and extending its effective organisational strength.

He was a great statesman, perhaps the greatest who ever emerged from Austria. He knew the nervous system of this sick multi-national State in all its ramifications, and he knew also the conditions of its survival. He strove for its survival, because he understood that its disintegration would unleash a disaster for all humanity.

But his heart was not with Austria; he hated her for the moral and intellectual corruption inherent in the Hapsburg Empire.

His heart beat for the German people. The unification of the remaining Austrian tribe of the Germans with the whole of the German people in a Republic was an ideal cherished by him since his youth. And yet he accepted only with the utmost hesitations in Austria. Only after the inevitability of national revolutions matured and the break-up of the multi-national State had become an inexorable necessity, did he take the lead into the new destiny. When the German members of the Austrian Parliament assembled for the first time as a legislative body (on October 21, 1918), Victor Adler, sick unto death, made the last speech of his life. He began by giving "our fraternal greetings to our Slav and Latin comrades" whose nations were now near achieving self-determination. "This right we recognise without any limitation or reservation." But he claimed the same right for the German people in Austria as well. The German-Austrian State, constituted as a republic, should, he suggested, unite with its neighbouring nations in "a Union of Free Nations". But should the other nations reject such a commonwealth, then the German-Austrian State, deprived of its economic resources and markets, would be compelled to join Germany as a federate State.

It was a strange coincidence that his most ardent political desires materialised almost in the last breath of his life. Two days before he died, the German Republic, and on the eve of his death, the Austrian Republic, were proclaimed and Austria's unification with the German Republic was stated. So, before his eyes closed, he saw the fulfilment of his political dreams.

At the Party Conference, twelve days before his death, he remained only for a while, perhaps merely to see for the last time the good comrades with whom he had carried the Labour movement from its beginning to the heights which it had now reached. The Austrian working people were no longer the wretched and despised under-dogs of society they had been when he began to organise and educate them thirty years before. They had built powerful trade unions and had greatly improved their conditions of life; they had built a strong Socialist movement, the influence of which was felt in every walk of public activity; they had developed a living spiritual community of their own which enriched every one of its members with a new meaning of life. They had won self-respect and the respect of others. And now, in this grave hour of crisis, society, feeling the full measure of the disaster that had overcome it because it had not heeded the wisdom of the Socialists, had cast its hopes upon the Socialist Party, which had withstood the hurricane of events. In his thirty years' work Victor Adler had created the movement; he had

infused it with his spirit; he had gathered round himself men of ability and moral strength to carry on the work.

After I left Victor Adler at the door of the hall, I saw Julius Deutsch crossing the floor towards me. He told me that, the night before, the Assembly had elected a provisional Government (called State Council) with Victor Adler as Foreign Secretary and Otto Bauer as his deputy, and that, among other Socialists in the Cabinet, he had been appointed Under-Secretary for the Forces, and that I was to be his Adjutant. Though Deutsch was Under-Secretary, it was agreed in the Cabinet that his was the responsibility, and in fact he led the office, and was appointed Secretary a few months later. He asked me to go instantly to the Ministry to secure enough rooms and to "take over" as much of the Ministry as I could, while he would go to the barracks to take the oath of the troops for the new Government.

That was a little too abrupt a change of scene for my slow-working imagination. I had never before entered a Ministry building and had never seen a Minister. Now I was asked to go and to "take over" the most powerful Ministry of His Majesty the Emperor and King. Well, I took a tram for the War Ministry and boldly entered the gate. The officer in charge of the guard, to whom I introduced myself as Adjutant of the new Secretary, told me with a resigned sigh that in the Minister's apartment on the first floor I would find some other gentlemen who were also about to "take over" the Ministry.

The Austro-Hungarian War Ministry was housed in a comparatively new building of vast size and embellished with all the pompous glamour of a most ancient and once most illustrious empire, which apparently with its decay had lost its good taste. The first room into which I was ushered by an attendant, dressed like a butler, was a huge hall, shining in white, polished marble which covered its big walls; the far wall had eight or ten French windows with yellow silk curtains; on the right was a double door. From the ceiling three gilded clusters, each with about fifty or sixty electric candles, hovered like mighty crowns. In this style and on this scale were most of the some twenty rooms of the Minister's apartment, and I wondered about my working in such pretentious surroundings; yet I had to, for two years.

The attendant asked me to enter the room on the right, and there I found a few people, dressed in civilian clothes. One of them was my opposite number, the Adjutant of the Secretary. We went immediately into the business of securing working rooms.

The legal position of our new office was very complicated, because there was still an imperial Government and at the same time a provisional Government, and, further, because the imperial

War Ministry was (as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) a joint Ministry of Austria and Hungary. Our bureaucratic task was to build into the body of the existing Austro-Hungarian War Ministry a purely German-Austrian Ministry. We had to build it from the very bottom, department after department, and had to build it with the greatest speed.

Ours was, in the first place, the task of demobilising the German-Austrian forces of the Hapsburg army. Exactly a week before the Austrian provisional Government was formed, the Italians, supported by strong British forces, launched an offensive in the sector of Monte Grappa, between the rivers Brenta and Piave. In this sector 780 Austro-Hungarian battalions had to meet 841 Italian and British battalions. It was one of the great battles of the war. It was also a most remarkable battle, for it revealed the astonishing phenomenon—so greatly misunderstood in the war against Hitler's Fascism—of the formidable suggestive power of the military machine. When the battle began, on October 24, 1918, the national revolutions all over the Hapsburg Empire were in full swing. And yet Czech and Polish, Hungarian and Slovene soldiers fought together with German soldiers with unparalleled bravery for a "king and country" which most of them hated and which, at any rate, was no longer theirs. The Czech Government had been constituted on October 14; but eleven days later Czech troops of the 4th Infantry Division, under the command of Hapsburg officers, launched a powerful counter-attack in the sector of the river Asolone and pushed the Italians back to their original position. The dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian army began in fact a few days after we had taken over responsibility, and it was the task of our newly established German-Austrian Ministry of Forces to bring order into the chaotic state of demobilisation.

But the far more important task was the building of a reliable force, faithful to the democratic Republic. Its success depended on the entire demobilisation of the whole of the Hapsburgs' forces. For we felt that if units of the Hapsburg army were left intact, they could become, under the command of vigorous officers, the nucleus of reactionary resistance to the new republican régime.

In long talks we had on the first or second day of our office, we (Deutsch and I) agreed not to take over a single unit from the Hapsburg forces, but to demobilise them as swiftly as conditions permitted and as the republican force was gathering strength. We decided to call it *Volkswehr* (People's Army). We also agreed that this republican force, and above all its commanding staff, as well as the staff of our Ministry, would have to be composed mainly of Socialists. We were by no means guided by the desire

to seek an illegitimate advantage for our Party; but we were fully aware from the beginning of the grave danger which could arise for the Republic if its most important instrument should fail. We considered Socialists as being wholly devoted to the republican cause. We did not exclude non-Socialist officers; we had to employ in the forces and in our office a great number of them in the higher ranks, because Socialist officers in sufficient strength were not available. But we were anxious to put our men in key positions and to secure for our services as many Socialists as possible.

On November 4, after Deutsch had secured the passing of the Act concerning the raising of the *Volkswehr* by the National Assembly, I assembled about fifty Socialist officers, some of them known to me or Deutsch, in my office and entrusted them with the organisation and command of the first fifty companies. We also began promoting N.C.O.'s, accredited by Labour organisations, to commissioned rank. But the most effective safeguard against a possible reactionary misuse of the forces were the Soldiers' Councils; in fact, they were the most powerful motor, pushing the revolution to the limits of its strength.

The break-up of the Hapsburg Empire was the result of the reciprocal effects of military defeats and revolutionary actions. Military defeats released hitherto suppressed national and social revolutionary forces, and revolutionary fermentation disintegrated the army and diminished its strength of resistance. So military defeat and revolutionary fermentation acted and reacted on one another. Although these tremendous processes were clothed in legal forms, in proclamations by the constitutionally elected representatives of the Austro-Hungarian nations, the representatives themselves acted under the pressure exerted by the revolutionary masses in the streets and by the soldiers in the barracks.

This was the case, above all, in German Austria. Just as the Czech, Polish, South-Slav and Hungarian members of the Parliaments and Diets had formed National Assemblies which called their respective nation-States into being, so the German members of Parliament, elected in 1911, constituted themselves the Provisional National Assembly and proclaimed the German-Austrian State. But the composition of the National Assembly did not reflect the real power-relation in the State. The non-Socialist parties, representing the peasants and the middle classes, had actually lost all power, which had rested hitherto upon the army, the police and the State administration. Now actual power lay with the industrial workers in the factories and, above all, with the soldiers in the garrisons. And even in the barracks the bulk of the troops was made up of industrial workers. The peasant soldiers had not waited for the demobilisation order;

they had left their units on the way back from the front, or had deserted their home garrisons on the day of the Armistice, eager to return to their villages. Those who remained in the barracks were essentially industrial workers, and in their hands were the instruments of power: an abundance of rifles, machine-guns and other implements of war.

These were the men who had endured unspeakable sufferings for four years. They had been forced to fight for a ruling class they hated and a fatherland in which they had known only frustration. They had been treated like dirt by the officers. Their families had lived in a state of half-starvation for two years. Even those called on to fight and to die were not given enough food to allay their hunger, while they witnessed the plenty which the officers, the war profiteers and black marketeers shamelessly enjoyed. They were in rags, their nerves were shattered, and their souls were filled with hatred of those who had led them into this monstrous disaster. They were in the grip of fear, haunted by anxieties of hopeless insecurity. The framework of society was in dissolution. Where were work and bread to come from? The magic of traditional ideas was gone. In their eyes Throne and Church were responsible for the catastrophe; they had become alike hateful and detestable to them. The whole edifice of the *ancien régime*, on which was grafted the capitalist fabric, was repulsive to them. In the bitterness of their hearts they would have liked to crush it in smithereens; and they actually had the power to do so.

There was only one moral authority left: the Social Democratic Party. Whatever the Socialists had said at the beginning of the war was forgiven and forgotten. In their minds the Party had fought the *ancien régime* relentlessly and uncompromisingly before the war, and for peace during the war. In their minds the old figure of Victor Adler stood out as a man who through all his life had striven for the poor and disinherited as their champion, adviser and true friend. In their minds, above all, towered Friedrich Adler, whose deed, and speech before the court, had swept away every doubt about and discontent with the Party which had hitherto rankled in the conscience of many a faithful worker. The Social Democratic Party had a vision, a message of hope. Now the time had arrived to realise it. The soldiers were resolved to lend their power to this work.

Every day there were big soldiers' meetings in the yards of the barracks. In the first hours of the revolution they had elected in every unit a Soldiers' Council which was itself integrated into a council of the garrison; deputies of all garrison councils elected a National Executive of the Soldiers' Councils. New men who had

never before been connected with the Labour movement emerged from the turbulent, anonymous masses as their leaders in the councils and as their speakers at the meetings; one of them, for instance, was the writer Franz Werfel, another the journalist Egon Erwin Kisch. They harangued the soldiers, urging them to "deeds", and they were very impatient with the Party leadership, because they thought no adequate "deeds" had followed their promises. And often the excited soldiers would march, with a red flag at the head of the column, from the barracks to the front of our Ministry, and would send a deputation upstairs to submit their views or grievances. During my first six months in the marble hall I frequently received four or five such deputations a day. And then came deputations of the war cripples and of the war widows, and deputations of the "returned", and of the unemployed, and of the homeless, and all of them asked desperately for help.

But the fabric of society in which all of us lived was literally out of joint. The collapse of the Hapsburg Empire came suddenly. With one stroke the administrative machinery of the State and its industrial life came to a standstill. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers had rushed home from the fronts, but there was no food for them. German Austria, which was now separated from the other Hapsburg dominions and had become a political and economic entity, had been an industrial country, the chief workshop of the whole Empire; she was never able to feed her population from her own resources. She was still less able to do so after the collapse, for the war had exhausted the soil, reduced the arable land and the man-power to till it, and destroyed the livestock. During the war the yield in wheat had decreased by more than half, the yield in potatoes by almost two-thirds, and the available livestock could provide for only a third of the population. The Allies had continued the blockade of Austria after the Armistice; the newly created nation-States put blockades of their own upon Austria. German Austria was after November 1918 entirely cut off from every source of food: from the overseas markets as well as from Hungarian, Galician and Czech markets, which had supplied Austria with food hitherto.

So when the soldiers returned they found the country in a state of semi-famine. H. N. Brailsford, who visited Vienna in February 1919, stood aghast at the extent of the starvation he found there. "Bread, of course, is severely rationed, at the rate of a half-kilogram (about 1 lb.) weekly," he recorded. "As one got it in the hotel, the portion amounted to three slices of the long Viennese loaf for the whole day, or about one moderately thick slice of an ordinary English loaf. Milk, butter and cheese were in my experience unobtainable even in the best hotels and



restaurants. Potatoes one could occasionally get in good hotels, but for the working-class they had entirely disappeared." And as far as meat was concerned, he found Vienna, when returning to it in April, in its fourth consecutive meatless week. Anaemia, he further observed, seemed to have smitten the whole people. "The faces of the women and the children are of any tint from yellow and grey to ashy white, and their lips suggest that nearly everyone is anaemic."\*

There was no work for the soldiers returning from the fronts. German Austria's industry depended entirely on the import of Czech coal. But the first thing the Czechoslovakian Government did after the proclamation of their Republic was to prohibit their country's coal from being exported to Austria. So of the fourteen blast-furnaces in Upper Styria, thirteen had to be blown out; a considerable part of Austrian industry had to stop work; the transport services in Vienna had to be suspended for weeks; electric light in the homes, shops and on the streets had to be restricted to one or two hours a day for want of electric power. And of course there was no heating whatever in the houses. During that grim winter of 1918-1919, in blacked-out Vienna, we had to work and to live in icy rooms, underfed and in worn-out clothes.

These were the conditions under which the Austrian Republic came into being and had to struggle for the first three years of her life. My first son was born at the end of August 1922, almost four years after the Armistice; this was an event of twofold significance, because with the boy milk came into our home for the first time in years, for only nursing mothers were entitled to the meagre milk rations. A medical examination of 186,000 Viennese school children revealed that only 6732 of them were not undernourished.†

To the embittered, underfed, nerve-racked, poverty-stricken masses, the idea of the working-class dictatorship appeared to be the final message of hope. In Russia, they thought, it had worked miracles. There, the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils had assumed the full power in the State, had given back the land of the nobility to the poor peasants and had socialised industry. Even if the Russian people were also suffering hardships, perhaps even more than the Austrians, there were two differences: first, in Russia every one had to suffer, and not, as in Austria, the poor alone; and secondly, the Russians at any rate knew for what they were suffering, and they also knew that these sufferings would end one day and that they would

\* H. N. Brailsford, *Across the Blockade*, 1919, pp. 40, 41.

† See for the whole story of the revolution in Austria, Otto Bauer's most admirable *Die Österreichische Revolution*, 1923.

then enjoy the fruit of Socialism. Were Austria, however, to remain a capitalist country, they argued, what had the workers to hope for?

These questions were passionately discussed at innumerable workers' and soldiers' meetings; it was the topic particularly at the daily meetings of the 41st Battalion of the *Volkswehr*, called the "Red Guard", which had been founded by intellectual romantic revolutionaries of recent Socialist conversion.

On the morning of November 11 the papers published an announcement by the Government that on the following day the National Assembly would pass the Act on the fundamentals of the Austrian Constitution, and that the Republic would be solemnly proclaimed from the steps of the House of Parliament. At the same time it was made known that the Socialist Party had called on the Viennese workers to assemble before the House of Parliament and to attend this historic Act of State.

A few hours later the Soldiers' Council of the "Red Guard" turned up in our office and impetuously demanded the proclamation of a Socialist Republic. We had a long and very heated discussion with our friends, attempting to convince them that that could not be done for the moment. We had, of course, the power, we pointed out, to proclaim the dictatorship of the working-class; but we had certainly not the power to prevent the occupation of Vienna by Italian troops or, at any rate, to prevent a famine should the peasants, reactionary as they were, blockade Vienna with its surrounding industrial area.

Our friends appeared to be persuaded, for they stopped arguing and they asked only for the privilege of the inclusion of their battalion in the guard of honour which was to be placed in front of the House of Parliament on the occasion of the proclamation of the Republic. Deutsch, who had already made his arrangements and had put this radical battalion out of the "danger zone", most reluctantly consented to their wish after they had solemnly protested their loyalty and promised to march out with rifles, but without ammunition.

On November 12, 1918, at noon, a number of battalions of the *Volkswehr* marched before the pseudo-classic building in solid Doric style in which the Parliament was housed, and the 41st Battalion, in good military order, lined up opposite its mighty ramp, flanked by the huge parliamentary flagstaffs. Soon afterwards the Ringstrasse was filled with tens of thousands of workers, and at three o'clock the big gates of the House of Parliament opened and the National Assembly, headed by its three Presidents and the members of the Government, walked in procession to the balustrade of the ramp. When the Socialist President, Karl

Seitz, announced the First Article of the Constitution, proclaiming that "Austria is a Republic", the new flag of State—red-white-red in colour—was slowly hoisted on the two flagstuffs. At this moment a few soldiers of the "Red Guard" rushed to both the flagstuffs, tore away the white piece of the flag and hoisted the remaining red parts of it, while the whole battalion under the command of its officers charged both ascents of the ramp with the same bravery as they had displayed when storming a fortified hill occupied by the enemy. The members of the Assembly and of the Government withdrew through the gates while Deutsch and I, together with some other people, attempted to stop the attack with words. I did not have much opportunity to display my eloquence, because the first soldier I met hit me over the head with the butt of his rifle. Meanwhile his comrades opened a terrific fire on the House of Parliament and through its gates. I soon got on my feet again and saw the masses of people disperse; so I, too, went away.

This day which was meant to assume a historical significance thus ended with a shrill dissonance. But the "incident", though engineered by a handful of romantic revolutionaries, undoubtedly manifested the prevailing mood of the working people and soldiers. The numbers of romantic revolutionaries rose, and the feeling of the working people, expressed by the romantic revolutionaries, increased rapidly in degree as misery increased and, above all, when Hungary and (for a short duration) Bavaria became Soviet Republics.

But could Socialism be realised in this mutilated Austria? There was, first of all, territory contested by the newly born nation-States Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. From the south, Slovenian troops advanced in Carinthia, and in the north Czech troops forcibly occupied the German territories of Bohemia and Moravia. The Hapsburg Empire had been dismembered in the name of the sacred right of self-determination of nations. The German-Austrian Social Democrats had unequivocally recognised this right; the newly established Czech Government, however, denied the same right to three and a half million German Austrians in a domain which the Czechs claimed on the ground of ancient historical rights.\* "We don't negotiate with rebels," stated the Czech Minister Rašín to the Socialist leader Josef Seliger when he suggested leaving the decision about the Sudeten German territories to the Peace Conference.

This breach of right by force evoked bitter feeling among the German-Austrian workers in those territories. Some of them

\* There were 6,291,000 Czechs and 3,513,000 Germans in Czechoslovakia in 1919.

urged the Viennese Government to oppose force with force. The most outspoken Socialist leader of these militant nationalist German Austrians was Karl Kreibich, whom I knew from Warnsdorf; he was then working on the Socialist daily, *Vorwärts*, in Warnsdorf's sister town, Reichenberg. He was a brilliant orator, though a pedestrian writer, but much liked by the younger generation of Socialists for his fanatical views.

When his town Reichenberg was imminently threatened by the Czech invasion, he appealed at a mass meeting to the Germans to resist with all the means at their disposal. "On the day when Czech troops march into our town," he declared, "not a single factory, not a single shop must work; the gates of all buildings, the doors of all taverns and shops must be closed; the wheel of no tram or lorry, of no car or train must move. When the Czechs enter our town, they shall enter a dead town. We will do everything to resist against force by protests for our rights."

And then he threatened armed resistance. He stated: "If no other means for the preservation of our right of self-determination are left to us, then we will resort to force. For three or four years of the war we have fought for nothing on the snowy mountains of Tyrol and the Carpathians, at the Piave and on the Sette Commune; now, if no other choice is left to us, we will fight on the mountains of the Jeschken and the Jaberlich."\*

\* Professor Rudolf Laun, *Die tschechoslovakischen Ansprüche auf deutsches Land*, 1919, p. 22. Karl Kreibich, who later joined the German Communists in Czechoslovakia, produced in 1944 a remarkable recantation of his attitude in 1918. He now feels that he and the other Germans of Bohemia and Moravia had acted as "rebels". "German policy in Bohemia as in Moravia was a rebellion, an open and declared rebellion," he says (in *The Central European Observer*, July 21, 1944). This indictment is not quite easy to understand. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was a realm of many nations. One of them was the Czech, another the Slovak, another the German. The representatives of the Czech and Slovakian people agreed (at their Pittsburg Convention of March 30, 1918) to form a Czecho-Slovak State, composed of all territories inhabited by Czechs and Slovaks; the representatives of the German Austrians agreed to form a German-Austrian State, composed of all territories inhabited by German Austrians. When the German-Austrian State came into being, the territories of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia inhabited exclusively or almost exclusively by German Austrians naturally formed part of the German-Austrian State. The moral principle in the name of which the Czechs had revolted against the Hapsburgs' Empire, and on which their statehood was founded, was the principle that every nation has a claim to self-determination, and that no historic title, however ancient, must impede the right of nations to determine their destiny. But hardly was that claim realised before the Czech Government raised, in the name of ancient rights, their claim to territories inhabited by three million German Austrians. The Czechs claimed for themselves the right of self-determination; towards other nations (German Austrians and Hungarians) they claimed the right of historic titles. The Czechs claimed for themselves the application of moral principles of right; towards other nations

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Although we in Vienna were not in a position to send troops to North Bohemia, as Karl Kreibich had wished, we sent some *Volkswehr* battalions to South Bohemia and Carinthia. While the unavailing resistance against the superior Czech forces, led by French officers, soon ended, fighting against Yugoslav troops in Carinthia went on until June. So even after the Armistice our young Republic could not live in peace.

But what frustrated the Socialist development in Austria most was the formidable power which the Allies wielded.

The Allies treated German Austria not only as a conquered country, but also as a guilty country. In contradiction to Wilson's promise that "No people shall be . . . punished because the responsible rulers of a single country have themselves done deep and abominable wrong",\* the Versailles Treaty laid the whole responsibility for the war upon Germany, as well as upon "her Allies". Germany's Allies were, apart from Turkey, the Hapsburg Empire, consisting of ten nations. According to the Treaty all ten Austro-Hungarian nations would have to be regarded as responsible for the war. But the Allies distinguished carefully between them. They did not bring to book the Polish Austrians, for example, who formed, under Pilsudski, a national militia to combat an ally of the Allies (Russia); neither did they indict, to choose another instance, the Croats, who were the backbone of the Hapsburg army. They singled out as scapegoats the German-Austrian people, who had resisted the Hapsburg régime more heroically than any other of the Austro-Hungarian nations. They

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they applied the amoral principles of power. They subdued a third of the total German-Austrian population by naked force. The Czech Government acted in precisely the same way as Pilsudski's Government acted towards Soviet Russia. The Polish State, founded in the name of the right of self-determination, invaded Soviet Russia in the name of historic titles. The German Austrians in Bohemia and Moravia had as little duty of allegiance towards the newly established Czecho-Slovak State as the Ukrainians had towards the newly established Polish State. The Ukrainians who fought against the invading Polish army were certainly not rebels. How, then, can people who defend their right of self-determination, as the German Austrians in Bohemia and Moravia did in 1918-1919, be indicted as "rebels"? The violation of the principle of self-determination and the application of power policy was a blessing neither to Poland nor to Czechoslovakia; this the world has since experienced, to its misfortune. There is another lesson to be derived from this story. The Allies acknowledged the Czech claim to German territories on the ground that without them the newly founded Czech State would be unable to prosper. In the same breath the Allies rejected the Austrian claim to join Germany, although that claim was also based on the fact that this mutilated Austria could never prosper if she remained a separate economic entity. Indeed, she decayed, and contaminated with the germ of her economic disease half of Europe.

\* Wilson's Address to Congress, December 4, 1917.

и (Millennium)

not only tolerated the Czech occupation of territories inhabited by a third of the total German-Austrian population, but they treated the rest of them most harshly.

Their executive in Austria was the Armistice Commission, headed by the Italian General Segrè; its British member was Colonel Cunningham, who, accompanied by his Adjutant, sometimes turned up in my office to "have a word" with Deutsch. I always knew what "having a word" meant: another ultimatum. Wilson had promised to supply Austria with some food and coal on condition that "order" was maintained. The interpretation of "order", or of its disturbance, was left to General Segrè. So he could decide how many, if any, food and coal transports might cross the Austrian frontiers. Hardly a week passed during the first six months after the Armistice without an ultimatum under the threat of stopping the food and coal transports, or even of occupying Vienna. He had the means to do it, and also the legal title, for according to the Armistice Treaty the Allies had the right to occupy our towns and our railways; Italian troops actually occupied Tyrol and parts of Carinthia. The rich, afraid of socialisation and bolshevisation, implored Segrè to occupy Vienna also. Whenever there was a workers' demonstration or some other trouble, he threatened this occupation or, at any rate, the stopping of food transports.

But one day the Hungarian workers set an example. On March 21, 1919, the Hungarian Soviet Republic was proclaimed. This was the answer to an Allied ultimatum, submitted to the Karolyi Government by the French Colonel Vyx with the usual dictatorial opening words: "*J'ordonne*". It demanded the ceding of more Hungarian territory to Czechoslovakia and Rumania.

The Hungarian Soviet Government dared to resist; it did not even shrink from fighting in a two-front war of defence: against Czechoslovakia and Rumania.

Bela Kun, head of the Hungarian Communist-Socialist Government, immediately concluded an alliance with Soviet Russia. Soviet Russia was far away; but Austria was near—she bordered on Hungary. There lay the means Hungary needed so badly, large reserves in artillery and other war materials, big industrial resources and man-power. And there Socialists were in command of all these things. He appealed to the Austrian working class to join the Hungarian.

The temptation to proclaim Austria a Soviet Republic and to join Soviet Hungary and Soviet Russia was overwhelmingly strong; it became enhanced when Bavaria, too, was proclaimed a Soviet Republic only a fortnight later. The world revolution seemed to be on the move. Could it not be that if Austria,

situated between Hungary and Bavaria, became Bolshevik, Czechoslovakia, Italy and, above all, Germany would also go Bolshevik? Then the vast lands from the Pacific to the Rhine and from the North Sea to the Tyrrhenian would form one enormous fraternal federation of Socialist States, a Red Colossus striding ever farther over the globe.

So the romantic revolutionaries viewed the situation. So, above all, did the Communists.

But the realistic revolutionaries saw clearly that such an adventure would inevitably lead to disaster. Certainly, the situation might perhaps have been different had Germany turned Bolshevik. But Germany's working class apparently rejected Bolshevism. So the counter-revolutionary Free Corps, organised by Noske, had an easy task in smashing the Spartakus revolt, and the Soviet Bavarian Republic too. Nor were there any serious indications from Italy or Czechoslovakia which would have warranted the Communist expectations. On the contrary: if Austria had been proclaimed a Soviet Republic and had joined Soviet Hungary, Czech troops, being at war with Hungary, would have marched against Vienna, while the Italians, allies of the Czechs, would have stopped food and coal transports.

In the passionate controversies at soldiers' and workers' meetings the issue whether the Soviet system in itself was more desirable and better than the 'parliamentary system was of secondary importance; the discussions culminated in the valuation of the actual power relations in Europe. There was among the Austrian Socialists none of any standing who did not reject this terrific hazard.

Of course, we helped Soviet Hungary in her mortal fight with all our means, short of an alliance. Deutsch connived at the smuggling of a considerable amount of arms to Hungary; he also connived at the forming, inside the *Volkswehr*, of a voluntary force under the command of the Communist Rothziegel, which went to Hungary and fought gallantly on the Rumanian front (Rothziegel fell there in action). But we could do no more.

The Communists now attempted to force the decision by a *Volkswehr coup d'état*.

In Austria, in spite of the sharp division of opinion during the first half of the war, the Social Democratic Party had preserved its unity, thanks to two outstanding personalities: Victor Adler and Friedrich Adler. While many Socialists were deeply disappointed with Victor Adler's policy at the beginning of the war, to everyone the thought of parting from the man who embodied everything noble in the Socialist world, and of splitting the Party which he had created, was repulsive. In fact, the issue

of the separation from the Party was never touched during the whole controversy on the war policy. And his son's deed and, above all, his speech before the court, redeemed the errors of the past and reunited the Party in its purpose. The Austrian Socialist Party entered the historic moment of the revolution with closed ranks.

There was, however, a small group of workers who, disappointed with the ending of the strikes in January 1918, formed the Communist Party under the leadership of Franz Koritschoner in November 1918.

Franz Koritschoner, a frail-looking, bespectacled bank clerk of about my age, was the typical romantic revolutionary: sincere, decent, inspired by lofty ideas, but highly confused. When in a talk with him during these critical weeks I pointed to the danger of the occupation of Vienna by Italian troops, he waved aside this argument by replying, "Let them come, next day you will have a revolution in Italy". When I reminded him that Vienna needed a daily supply of twelve railway trains of food and that the stores were so depleted that if General Segrè were to stop the trains in Trieste we should be forced into capitulation within a week, he promised supplies from—Russia!

But such arguments impressed many workers, and particularly the great masses of the unemployed—those embittered, frustrated men and women who believed that they had nothing to lose and a world to win.

Bela Kun considered the alliance with a Soviet Austria a question of life and death. He neglected no means of flooding Austria with Communist propaganda. Above all, he concentrated his efforts, through his emissaries, on winning over the *Volkswehr*, for if the only armed force in the State was prepared to march into the Soviet camp, there was no power in the country to resist it.

The men at the helm of the Ministry of Forces were thus confronted with the most delicate and most responsible of all tasks: to prevent the *Volkswehr* attempting a *coup de force*.

In our task we were guided by the anxious desire, shared by every one of us in the Party, to avoid under any circumstances fratricidal fighting in the camp of the working class. We were shocked by the Spartakus struggle in Germany. There must be no bloodshed in Austria—that was our firm resolve. Our job was to persuade the men, to convince them, to appeal to their reason, to their sense of responsibility and to their duty of solidarity with the working class.

It was difficult enough to immunise the common men in the *Volkswehr*—people who, for the greater part, were politically



uneducated—against the propaganda of the Communists and the romantic revolutionaries. Our nerve-racking job became almost insuperable because of the nature of the man who served as chairman of the National Executive of the Soldiers' Councils.

The National Executive of the Soldiers' Councils carried great weight, for it spoke with the voice of 60,000 men armed to the teeth. Our Ministry could act only with its consent. I was a member of it, and it was my particular job to persuade the members of this committee to reconcile their policy with the needs of the Republic.

Chairman of this body was Josef Frey. He was neither a newcomer nor a romantic revolutionary. When I met him first in 1908 he was a leader of the Socialist Students' movement. He was a serious student of sociology, widely read in Marxian literature, and I was happy at being admitted to his seminar at the Students' Club, in which, under his able tutorship, Otto Bauer's *Nationalitätenfrage* was discussed and analysed, chapter by chapter. Before he joined the forces as an officer he worked on the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, and when he arrived in Vienna a few weeks after the proclamation of the Republic he became, as all of us wanted, the soldiers' chairman.

But with Josef Frey a new type of personality emerged from the Socialist movement, a type which I had not known before. He possessed not only an acute sense for the essentials of power, but he was also driven by a burning desire to attain power for himself. The collaborators in the Socialist movement, big and small, had hitherto, for all their human weakness, always put the common interest of the movement above their personal aspirations. However strong their desire for self-assertion and their personal ambitions, their human shortcomings had never endangered the Party, or even produced an "affair" in it.

Josef Frey grew up in this tradition, which Victor Adler had so magnificently moulded, and I never doubted that Frey had also lived up to this tradition. He was married to the daughter of Therese Schlesinger, the most wonderful woman in our movement, the human embodiment of utter selflessness and devotion. Whenever I met him at Therese Schlesinger's house, I found his mood of thought in perfect harmony with the noble atmosphere by which it was penetrated.

But after some talks with him, and after observing him at the meetings of the Executive of the Soldiers' Councils, I noticed a profound change in his nature. Passions, which must have laid dormant in a subterranean layer of his soul, or fettered by the strong moral force of Socialist tradition, had loosened as this tradition itself appeared to have been shaken by the social and

moral turmoil. He attempted to forge the armed forces of the Republic into an instrument for his personal ends.

And he almost succeeded. He was, to use a term of Max Weber, a charismatic personality, a giant in stature, good-looking, a formidable orator, fascinating, daring, reckless, a figure descended from the *Condottieri* of the Renaissance. He was, of course, not of the traitor type, like Mussolini or Henry de Man; he would never have betrayed the faith of his youth. He rationalised his will to power; he explained with an overwhelming flow of words and arguments all his doings in the interest of the working people; and he apparently believed it sincerely. But his words hardly veiled his real intentions. He aimed, through the medium of the "dictatorship of the proletariat", for which he strove, at the attainment of his own dictatorship. And as the commander of the "Red Guard", 600 men strong, and as the leading figure of the *Volkswehr*, then 60,000 men strong, Frey's words were fraught with a terrific explosive power.

The Party, however, did not yield to his threat; it expelled him. He had been in close contact with the Communist Party for months; he now joined it, and was appointed its leader in the expectation that he would act now. But there were some inherited inhibitions which apparently paralysed his will; he hesitated to seize power in face of a united working-class opposition. And he felt that if he were to carry out a *coup de force*, he would have to wage war against the working class itself. So after a few months the Communists dropped him as well.

The same trend of feeling which moved the soldiers was operating among the workers. They were also strongly affected by the Bolshevik temptation, and they, too, would have preferred a Soviet Austria.

There were two men who ultimately decided the issue: Otto Bauer and Friedrich Adler; the former's intellectual power, the latter's moral genius.

Otto Bauer was then Foreign Secretary and at the same time President of the Socialisation Commission; he was, above all, a leading member of the "Red Cabinet Council" (consisting of the Socialist members of the Government), which in almost daily conferences discussed current policy. But regardless of the strain of his office, he devoted much strength to warding off the danger threatening from the romantic revolutionaries. Every day he wrote the leading article in the *Arbeiter Zeitung* and addressed workers' meetings. His persuasive power was irresistible. There was none among us who could state the case so convincingly as Otto Bauer.

But it was, to my mind, Friedrich Adler's attitude which

secured the final triumph of reason. Friedrich Adler, released from prison on the first day of the revolution, was the most popular figure among the working class; he was adored, and time had not diminished this warm affection.

When Adler left prison, Kôritschoner approached him to take the lead of the Communist Party, to be formed shortly. Adler rejected the suggestion of splitting the Labour movement, and when the split occurred, he devoted himself to alleviating the bitterness of the fight between the two wings of the working class. Warned by the fateful example of the internecine struggles in the German Labour movement, he was extremely anxious to avoid armed clashes within the workers' camp. He organised the institution of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils on a national scale, thus creating a common forum on which the controversy between Socialists and Communists could be fought out in meeting-halls with arguments, instead of, as in Germany, in the streets with machine-guns. There the Communists could, as equals, state their case and attempt to persuade the duly elected delegates from the factories and barracks. There argument stood against argument, and it was agreed that the majority decision of the Councils' Conference was binding on the Social Democratic Party as well as on the Communist Party.

In these conferences Friedrich Adler, the elected chairman of the Executive of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, fought unrelentingly and fearlessly against Bolshevism. It was a most unpopular fight, for, in this democratic world of misery, Bolshevism at least offered a hope. But "popularity is an asset to be consumed", Adler once said, and he was resolved to lose his popularity with the masses, rather than yield to a policy that he considered disastrous for the working class.

Frey had to win over to his case the majority of the delegates. He tried hard, and he failed completely. He recognised that if he were to carry out what he was aiming at, he would have the front of the Austrian working class against him. He ultimately shrank from this high treason.

The Communists, however, had no such inhibitions; they were bent on the *coup de force*. About a week after the proclamation of the Bavarian Soviet Republic, on April 18, 1919, they organised an assault against the House of Parliament; they set it on fire, and when the police attempted to drive them back, they were received with rifle bullets. Six policemen were killed, with their horses. Nothing demonstrated more impressively the conditions of the Viennese working people than the fact that the masses, seeing dead horses on the pavement, forgot the purpose of their action and rushed to them, cutting pieces of meat out of the still

warm corpses. A few companies of the *Volkswehr* appeared and dispersed the assailants without using force. The first Communist attempt to seize power had failed.

Now Bela Kun sent Ernst Bettelheim to Vienna to do it better. He was Frey's cousin, and I sometimes met him at Therese Schlesinger's house. He was a slick young man, smartly dressed, dexterous and clever, cynical and unscrupulous, always grinning and always deceitful—the type of certain militant Communists who bring shame on sincere Communists. He of course had no use for Communists of Koritschoner's type; so Koritschoner, with his Communist executive, was sacked instantly by Bettelheim. He organised the *coup de force* for June 15, and according to his plan the *Volkswehr* was to march fully armed from its barracks and seize the public buildings, while the Hungarian Trans-Danube Corps was to cross the Austrian frontier. This plan was worked out in every detail, including the instructions for street-fighting.

Unfortunately for Bettelheim, we got hold of his plan four days before it was set in operation. Friedrich Adler convened the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils for a conference and revealed the plan on the eve of its execution. While Adler's speech and a corresponding statement by the Conference destroyed the impetus of the impending action, its preparations had been pushed so far that apparently it could not be stopped. So, on the appointed day, Vienna for the first time witnessed the distressing sight of a street battle; thanks to the loyalty of the *Volkswehr*, the casualties were comparatively low: twenty men were killed and about eighty wounded.

After more than eight months of hard struggles, Bolshevism in Austria was finally defeated. Its defeat warded off unspeakable disasters, the same with which Soviet Hungary was visited: war, famine, and ultimately the inevitable conquest of the Labour movement by a ruthless reactionary dictatorship. Yet there was no feeling of triumph. We felt frustrated, for we had hoped that the end of the war and the beginning of the revolution would signal a new dawn for humanity. But we had to toil our uphill way under bleak skies.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### THE INERT REVOLUTION

"We ghosts who are dead, are huger hosts  
Than you on the upland, than you on the coasts. . . .  
The core of our thoughts, and the roar of our deeds  
The tune of your murmuring fountains feeds.  
Abideth our love, and our hatred remains;  
They are throbbing above in the mortals' veins.  
To what we've endured and secured and found,  
The lives of the living forever are bound."

—Conrad Ferdinand Meyer.

How COULD all our expectations end in such utter disappointment? How could the very day which ought to have been the birthday of a new civilisation be the beginning of a new kind of frustration?

A quarter of a century has now passed since the curtain came down on this fateful tragedy of Central Europe. Yet I vividly remember every scene, with its heroes, villains and its harlequins. The impression it left was of a potentially great performance from which the grandeur was missing.

The part Austria was able to play in this tragedy was most humble. The Allies had reduced our country to mendicancy. Of the ten million German Austrians, three and a half million were subdued by the Czechs and about another half by the Italians and Yugoslavs. We lost the industrial territories of North, North-West and South Bohemia; we lost South Moravia; we lost South Tyrol; we lost some valleys in Carinthia. All we retained were the barren Alps, beautiful to look at, but hard to live in, and, apart from a few provincial towns, Vienna. This capital of an empire of fifty-four millions, which has grown in 1000 years of history to a city of two millions, retained nearly the whole of its former population, but lost most of the sources of its livelihood; it was reduced to the capital of a dwarf State of six and a half million (almost a third of whom were Viennese). So we had to live on charity and be appreciative and docile, otherwise there would be no charity (as we were told by our benefactors every day). The Austrian Revolution had produced the men to carry it through. But the means were not permitted to the men. The limits of a revolution, of beggars are narrow.

To the Austrian people only one way remained open to regain

a chance of prosperity and self-respect; this was unification with the German people. This aim presented itself with the dissolution of the Hapsburg Empire. As a purely German-Austrian State was incapable of life, it had to be integrated into a wider community. And as the newly born nation-States refused to federate, the *Anschluss* was the last escape from permanent poverty. It was also an escape from the danger of cultural and moral emaciation with which every people is menaced when its economic and social progress is frustrated. So the National Assembly unanimously proclaimed German Austria a federate State of the German Republic, and the subsequent general elections unanimously confirmed this decision.

There was, to be true, not very much enthusiasm among the Austrian workers for the *Anschluss*. A German nationalist sentiment was alien to them. They were also disappointed with the course the revolution in Germany had taken. Yet they accepted the idea of the *Anschluss* for two reasons: first, because it appeared to them the only conceivable institutional remedy for mutilated Austria; and secondly, because they hoped that the *Anschluss* of the Austrian working class, united in purpose, would foster the genuine revolutionary forces in Germany.

But while we in Austria still discussed the prospects of the revolution in Germany and the momentum it might gain by the *Anschluss*, its wings were already broken.

It is hardly possible to convey now the tremendous expectations with which the proclamation of the German Republic was welcomed in Austria. It was in Germany that the Republic was proclaimed first. Austria only followed the German example (three days later). In Austria the Republic was proclaimed by members of Parliament, elected seven years before; in Germany it was called into being by a revolutionary act of the people themselves, assembled in their hundreds of thousands in front of the Royal Palace (on November 9). In Austria the new republican Government was elected by the Provisional National Assembly, and composed proportionately of Socialists and non-Socialists. In Germany it was an Assembly of revolutionary Workers' and Soldiers' Councils which elected the new republican Government, composed only of Socialists. The National Executive of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils wielded supreme power in the State, and the Government was responsible solely to them. The German-Austrian Republic was the offspring of national revolutions of the Slav peoples; the German Republic emerged from the tempest of a revolutionary rising of the German people.

The Socialist Government in Germany, revolutionary in its

origin, was recognised by the whole nation. For its power rested, in the first place, upon the millions of soldiers in the field army and in the home garrisons who represented a cross-section of the nation (workers, peasants and middle classes). Among them there appeared to be no difference of opinion; all of them wanted a Socialist Government. So from November 10, 1918, until January 19, 1919 (the day of the general elections for the National Assembly), there was a Socialist dictatorship in Germany; the writs of the Government had undisputed force of law in the whole country.

The second redeeming and promising feature of the German Revolution was, to all appearance, the re-unification of the Socialist movement. It had been split during the war into a patriotic and an international Socialist party. The Socialist Government which emerged from the revolution was composed of representatives of both Socialist parties (Majority Party and Independent Socialist Party). Remaining outside the Government was the *Spartakusbund*, a Socialist Left-wing movement, led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht; but it was numerically negligible, and its two leaders even failed to gain a seat in the National Assembly of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. The Spartakists apart, it now seemed as though the most unhappy fight within the Socialist camp would cease and that the Socialists would reunite in their common endeavour to build a Socialist Republic.

These were the first impressions we received in Austria from the revolution in Germany.

But soon one distressing disappointment followed hard on the heels of another. There came the news that the new Government had retained Field-Marshal Hindenburg as supreme commander of the returning field army; then, at the beginning of December, came the news about a counter-revolutionary *coup*, attempted by a Right-wing group, and that governmental troops had opened fire, not against the counter-revolutionaries, but against Spartakists. On Christmas Eve we heard about a furious street battle in Berlin between a division of revolutionary sailors, billeted in the Royal Palace, and troops under the command of Hindenburg's officers. Then, a few days later, came the disastrous news that the Independent Socialists had left the Government and that the Labour movement was split again.

The latter event, we felt, was bound to have most fateful repercussions. Until the resignation of the Independent Socialists, the riots in Germany appeared to have lacked a real issue. The fire which troops had opened on Spartakists (killing sixteen of them) who had protested against a counter-revolutionary *coup* was perhaps

due to the shattered nerves of the soldiers as well as of the multitude. The issue of the street battle between the sailors' division and governmental troops was simply ridiculous; it was caused by the refusal of the sailors to move from the Royal Palace to the Mar-stall unless they got 80,000 Marks. Both these incidents were, we assumed, growing pains of a Socialist Germany in the making.

But now, with the refusal of the Independent Socialists to share responsibility with the Majority Socialists, the struggle in Germany became an attempt to overthrow the Right Socialists and to replace them by a government of the Left Socialists. That became clear from a Manifesto the Independent Socialists issued on January 5, in which the Berlin workers were called on to rally behind the Berlin Police President, an Independent Socialist who had been dismissed by the Government after the Independents had resigned. The workers marched in their tens of thousands, while the Spartakists (who had a few days before constituted themselves as the Communist Party) occupied the buildings of the Socialist daily, the *Vorwärts*, and other papers. Again fierce battles raged through the streets of Berlin for a week.

This fight was immediately followed by a piece of news which left us in Vienna aghast. Gustav Noske, Minister of the Forces, had called on the old, imperial, hard-boiled officers, who hated the revolution like the devil, to form Free Corps in order to "restore order", giving them the power to shoot everyone found with arms. What they meant to do they made clear at once: almost on the same day they murdered Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. We felt they would murder the revolution and the Socialist movement in Germany together.

It appeared that the Berlin workers, led by the Independent Socialists and strongly influenced by the Communists, were resolved on an ultimate effort to retrieve the situation. They proclaimed a general strike in March, demanding the disbandment of the Free Corps. The strike brought on more fights, with many casualties, from which the reaction emerged triumphant. The Left movement appeared to be crushed.

Had the Majority Socialists deliberately betrayed the revolution? Could the men at the helm of a movement which for almost two generations had proclaimed their faith in Marxian revolutionary Socialism, a movement which had been the *avant garde* of the Socialist International, its pride and its pattern, have betrayed the very foundations of its being?

Certainly they did not deliberately betray their faith. The truth was that they had abandoned their belief in the essentials of the Socialist idea before the war, perhaps without knowing it.

In Marx's conception of Socialism, the class struggle forms its



fundamental principle. Marx did not, as some people assume, "invent" the class struggle; the class struggle is a historic fact. Marx has merely analysed its historic significance, its economic roots, its social dynamics.

But from his analysis he derived a concrete philosophy. It is the philosophy of the liberation of humanity from serfdom; it is the philosophy of the ultimate freedom of mankind. And it is through the class struggle alone that this philosophy can be realised. It is the only means through which a society based on the exploitation of men by men can be transformed into a society which does not know exploitation, because it has for its foundation the common ownership of the means of wealth. Then the class struggle which tears society asunder will disappear, because the cleavage between ruling and ruled, exploiting and exploited classes will disappear. The vision of the unity of mankind will become a reality.

The German Social Democratic Party had fully accepted Marx's teachings and had embodied his doctrine in its programme and in its policy before the war of 1914. It called itself a revolutionary Party, because it aimed at a revolutionary change in the power relations of society. Just as the middle classes in France, the "third estate", in the revolution of 1789, gained the power in the State and transformed the feudal society into a capitalist one, so the German Socialists visualised a revolutionary rising of the working classes winning the power in the State and transforming a capitalist society into a Socialist one. This vision guided their policy until 1914. They refused to identify themselves with the capitalist State; while they endeavoured to improve the conditions of the working people, they never lost sight of their ultimate aim: the conquest of power in the State by the working class.

In indissoluble correlation with this conception of the working-class struggle was the conception of its universality, a conception adopted by all Socialist Parties and embodied in the Socialist International.

The Fourth of August, 1914, saw the Fall of the Socialists—and not of the German Socialists alone—because they abandoned the fundamental principle of Socialism. They replaced the working-class struggle for power in the State by a national union of all classes for the preservation (or even increase) of the power of their own capitalist State in an imperialist war. They abandoned the universality of the working-class struggle and supplanted it by a national struggle. And because they had abandoned the idea of the working-class revolution, they were not prepared for the revolution when it came.

The tragedy of the German Socialists was not caused, as some

critics now say, by their reluctance to launch the final struggle for power in the decade prior to 1914. Under the given power conditions, such a struggle would have been suicidal. Nor was this tragedy caused by their refusal to abandon the revolutionary aspect of the movement and to accept Reformism (or Revisionism, or Fabianism) instead.

The tragedy was caused by the fact that the revolutionary character of the Socialist movement lost (during the decades without a chance of a revolution) its living force in the minds of the Socialists. They assumed that the stability of the capitalist society into which they had been born, and under the conditions of which they had to work for the working people, would last for ever, or at any rate for a very long time. They underestimated the inherent antagonisms of capitalist-imperialist society. They were haunted by the fear of a European war, and they clung desperately to the hope that it would be avoided. And because they wanted to believe that there would be no war, they excluded from their minds any serious contemplation of the revolutionary repercussions and possibilities of a major war.

The ultimate cause of the Socialist tragedy was not the fact that the German Socialists adhered to the Marxian conception of the working-class revolution, but the fact that this conception was submerged in their minds by the pressing tasks of the moment in the interest of the working people. The structure of society determined the structure of the movement. So in order to preserve the structure of the movement, the majority of the Socialist leaders (and particularly of the trade-union leaders) became slowly averse to the conception of a sudden, revolutionary change in the structure of society.

This psychological process culminated in the attitude of the Socialists during the war. As the war threatened the whole society with defeat, they rallied with the capitalist classes to defend it. Any revolutionary change in the structure of society during the war would have weakened the strength of its defence. In the psychological process which this war policy generated, the Majority Socialists became definitely anti-revolutionary in outlook. They strove most honestly for the democratisation of the German State; they opposed, however, any essential revolutionary change in the power relations between the classes, because they feared it would change the structure of society.

So for men like Ebert and Scheidemann the revolution of November 1918 meant the entire disruption of the conception of historic development, as they were used to seeing it. They were therefore not prepared for this event; in fact, they abhorred it, consciously or subconsciously.

This was the reason why the German revolution was so greatly wanting in inspiration and grandeur. Germany of 1918 was not like France of 1789:

“France standing on the top of golden hours,  
And human nature seeming born again.”

There were no men in Germany like Mirabeau, Robespierre, Danton, whose voices aroused revolutionary enthusiasm and drove the revolution to the limit of its strength. There were only Eberts and Scheidemanns, who, though they yielded to the pressure of the revolutionary urge of the people, were afraid of it and endeavoured to damp it. There was no Carnot who organised the military forces of the revolution; there was only a Noske who allied himself with the military caste of the *ancien régime*.

After the proclamation of the Republic, the overwhelming majority of the German people—regardless of their political attitude before the event—expected a new heaven and a new earth created by the Socialists. They expected an agrarian revolution in East Prussia which would partition the big landed estates of the Barons. They expected the nationalisation of the mines, of heavy industry, of the chemical trusts. They expected that just as the French Revolution of 1789 had broken the economic and political power not merely of the King but also of the whole feudal society, the German Revolution of 1918 would break up the economic and political power not merely of the Kaiser, but also of the whole of capitalist society. It was their intense disappointment at the fact that the pattern of pre-war society remained unchanged which drove the workers again and again to strikes and revolts.

After the March fighting in Germany, Julius Deutsch asked me to go to Berlin to convey to Noske the dismay and horror with which all of us in the Austrian forces were watching the organisation of the Free Corps. We had frequently discussed at the National Executive of the Soldiers' Councils the grave danger to our own military organisation of the German example. We considered Austria a part of the German Republic, and expected that the *Anschluss* would be accomplished. As we were not prepared to yield an inch from our principle that arms must be retained by genuine republicans only, in the case of the *Anschluss* there would be in Austria a Socialist militia and in Germany a counter-revolutionary militia. It is clear that such a state of things was bound to lead to trouble. That problem therefore had to be clarified, and I was assigned to ask Noske what he thought about the future of his Free Corps.

The first impression which I received from Berlin was of a big

city in the midst of a civil war. Here and there, there was still barbed wire in the streets. Big posters on the walls called Noske a counter-revolutionary bloodhound, while other posters cursed the Bolsheviks as the scourge of the earth. There were many nationalist posters, calling on the German youth to join the Free Corps. The streets in which the offices of the daily newspapers were housed displayed the scars of recent street battles.

I had a long talk with the Austrian Ambassador, Professor Ludo Hartmann, a highly cultivated, most charming man, with a delicate intellectual face, venerated by the Viennese workers as the founder of the *Volksheim*. His father, Moritz Hartmann, occupied an honourable place in the tradition of revolutionary Vienna, for he was a prominent 1848 revolutionary and a member of the revolutionary German National Assembly at Frankfurt. Ludo Hartmann, a historian of medieval Italy, guarded faithfully the liberal and national tradition of his father. The unification of the Austrian Germans with the Germans of the Reich was the supreme political idea of his life.

So from the outset of his talk with me he complained bitterly about the utter failure of his mission. Although the recently elected German National Assembly had made a gesture, and had invited him, as the representative of the German-Austrian Republic, to take a seat on the Commission of the German Federate States, "hardly anyone in Germany takes the idea of the *Anschluss* seriously", he said.

"In fact, they don't want the *Anschluss*," he added. "All their thoughts are occupied with their concern about the German frontier in the East. They discuss whether or not the Peace Treaty will allot Upper Silesia to Poland. But if you venture to suggest that Austria might perhaps be of greater importance for German unity than a few places in Upper Silesia, they look at you in surprise."

I found this view confirmed by every talk I had with German politicians. Friedrich Stampfer, editor of the *Vorwärts*, replied to my query about the *Anschluss*:

"What is the use of thinking about it? The Allies would certainly not permit it.

"Do you really believe," he asked me, "that the Allies will consent to an enlargement of Germany after defeating her?"

"But our claim to the *Anschluss* is raised," I replied, "in the name of the self-determination of nations. The Allies cannot easily disavow the principles for which they have waged the war."

"They will do worse still," he said. "We know something about what the Treaty has in store for us. They will indict the German people as the war guilty."

"But I maintain," he added, "that if the Treaty indicts the German people as solely guilty for the war, and if it cedes German territories in the East to Poland, we must not sign it, whatever the consequences might be."

"Don't talk about the *Anschluss*," Noske said to me when I had my interview with him. "I'm not interested in Austria. I've enough to do to restore order in Germany."

During the conversation in his office in the Bendlerstrasse I received a little lesson in how he did it. While we were talking, the telephone rang, and Noske, after having listened for a while, shouted into the mouthpiece, "Why bother with the fear of strikes? Forget about them and go to it! You are responsible to me that order is restored at once!" A little later his Adjutant came in and whispered something to him, and Noske, in his booming voice, commanded him to send some more troops to Merseburg.

"There you have your Workers' Councils," he said angrily to me. "They're making trouble everywhere. They're ruining Germany."

When I interposed that we, too, had trouble, but that we were anxious to avoid shooting, he became furious and struck the desk with his fist.

"We try to persuade the workers, and mostly we succeed," I said.

"But they set the whole of Germany ablaze!" he shouted.

I felt that the continuation of the conversation was a waste of time. When I pointed to the dismay his Free Corps had caused among the Austrian Socialists, he indicated that we should mind our own business. When I predicted that his Free Corps would break the neck of the Republic, he retorted, "Leave it to me, the leaders of the Free Corps are better Germans than the revolutionaries."

After half an hour of hot dispute, I left his office. I went down the heavily guarded staircase, and saw the machine-guns near the entrance of the house and barbed wire round it. I thought about his shouting, and I wondered whether I had ever met such a bully in human shape.

"He certainly is a bully," admitted Rudolf Hilferding when I told him about my experience with Noske.

I had not seen Hilferding for almost seven years—since I had moved from Berlin to Warnsdorf in 1912. He had gallantly fought against the war and the war policy of the Majority Socialists during the war, and became one of the leading figures of the Independent Socialists after the war. He founded the daily newspaper of the Independents, *Freiheit* (of which I was the Viennese correspondent), and he was its editor.

"But it's not only Noske—the workers, too, have gone mad. The latter, of course, in the opposite direction," Hilferding added. "Whatever the reasons are—war, deprivations, defeat—the fact is that they have lost their sense of proportion and control over their nerves. And it was their folly which gave bullies like Noske the opportunity.

"Noske would never have got the power," he went on, "had not our own people foolishly forced us from power. The trouble with the sailors was a frivolity. The trouble with Eichhorn [the Independent Berlin Police President] was a capital folly. But, on the other hand, we could not share responsibility for the wholesale shooting of workers. We had to leave the Government and let others take control.

"In every revolution blunders and follies are committed; that is inevitable," he continued. "There were big follies in the French Revolution, and in the Russian Revolution how many blunders have they made!

"But in the French and Russian Revolutions there was a glowing revolutionary will which swept the country like a prairie-fire," he went on. "There the men on the top were obsessed by the will to change the world. But our Eberts and Scheidemanns do not want to change the world. All they want is parliamentary government, that's all.

"The most fateful misfortune," he complained bitterly, "is that such small men were faced with so great an opportunity. Take men like Ebert and Scheidemann. I wouldn't say that they deliberately betrayed the revolution. That is impossible, because they have never been revolutionaries, so they never felt any loyalty towards the revolution. They were excellent organisers and propagandists in their time, but they simply do not understand the need of our day. They are entirely without vision. They are *petit bourgeois* who want first of all order. And then they are corrupted by the flattering compliments they receive from the upper crust, and want to please them in return. What an idea to leave Hindenburg in command! But Ebert was flattered by an offer which came from so almighty a man as the Field-Marshal. Now the generals and bankers and big industrialists are competing for the favours of Herr Ebert, and Ebert is delighted, and he thinks that it is his job to reconcile the revolution with the generals and the Ruhr industrialists!"

"And what about the workers?" I asked.

"The workers?" he answered. "Well, there are some of them who have a vision, however vague, of a new age which ought to commence now. But far larger is the number of those whose revolutionary temper is only the expression of utter embitterment

and despair. Rosa [Luxemburg] had a vision, and she did know what she wanted. But her followers are partly romantic revolutionaries and partly a crowd of frustrated men and women. They have no sense of the realities of power. They believed that if they occupied the building of the *Berliner Tageblatt* they would have won a piece of power. First they forced us out of the Government. But when the Government afterwards dismissed Eichhorn, who was our man, then they fought in the streets with guns to force the Government to retain him."

"But is it not a fact that the bulk of the workers are still supporting Ebert and Scheidemann?" I asked.

"That is true," he said. "The magic of Bebel's Party still works miracles. There are still millions of workers who trust in the Party and who accept whatever its leaders do, because they believe that there is no other way out. But the unspeakable shame is that the same workers would have followed a revolutionary lead of the Party, during the war as well as in the revolution. Only the revolutionary men on the top were missing. Not the workers have failed, but their leaders."

"However, it cannot be just an unhappy accident of history that a revolution lacks the men it needs," I said.

"Certainly not," he replied. "But it is an open question whether the natural limits of the revolution were not reached when Wilhelm was overthrown and parliamentary democracy was established in Germany. And for this limited revolution Ebert and Scheidemann were good enough."

"What do you mean by the limits of the revolution?" I asked.

"I mean that one of the factors which determines the extent of a revolution is the minds of men. It is certainly not the sole one, but a very important one. The minds of a generation of the French people were permeated with a new conception of things before the revolution of 1789 broke out. There was first Rousseau and the *Encyclopédistes*, and then there was a revolution. The political and social revolution of 1789 was preceded by a spiritual revolution. This spiritual revolution came not by mere chance; it was engendered by unbearable political and social conditions. Now, we Marxists were the *Encyclopédistes* of our day. We gave men a new conception of the world as it could be. Our conception, too, came not by chance. It was born of the inherent antagonisms of capitalist society. Yet it failed to permeate the minds of men, not because it was wrong, but because the political and social development of Europe in the forty years before the war seemed to have contradicted it. Because there was peace for forty years, men believed that the age of war had passed for good, at least in Europe. Because there was, more or less, an economic

equilibrium, men believed that it would last for ever. Because the wealth of the nations increased and civilisation progressed, men believed that it would go ahead indefinitely. So they believed that there was no imminent, pressing need for a revolutionary change of society. The revolutionary idea had not taken a deep enough root even among the working classes, still less among the intellectuals who always have generated the spiritual revolutions. When the sudden collapse of the old régime came, they did not know what to do. So they were content with a political change of society, just because it presented itself."

"Do you think that the revolution still has a chance?" I asked.

"I'm very sceptical," he answered. "We are trying to drive it farther. We are pressing for the nationalisation at least of the coal-mines and heavy industry. You know, I myself am a member of the Socialisation Commission. But in this commission as well as in the country it is as though a blight had killed every revolutionary will."

"How do you explain this amazing inertia?" I asked. "We expected that the German nation would experience a rebirth and something wonderful would emerge from the turmoil."

"It is, as I told you, in the first place because the minds of men were not prepared for this event," he replied. "The revolution did actually release tremendous forces, expressed in the Workers' Councils, for example. But the strength of this drive was soon spent, and so Ebert and Noske could fetter and ultimately break them. You see, arms are again in the hands of the reactionaries."

"How different it all would have been had the revolution risen not only in Germany and Russia, but also in France and England," I interposed.

"Of course! That is, in the second place, one of the fundamental roots of the tragedy of the German Revolution," he said. "We feel ourselves deserted by the French and English working classes. I do not mean the Socialist parties of those two countries; they behaved as they should. I mean the workers, the majority of the workers. Take England, for example. She is a country of which two-thirds of the total population belong to the industrial working people. They bothered so little about our revolution that not even half of them thought it worth while making the effort to go to the polls, and, of those who went, an overwhelming majority voted for the most harsh terms to be imposed upon revolutionary Germany. And in France, you know, it was exactly the same."

"That was indeed the deepest disappointment we have experienced," I said.

"But assuming," I went on, "that the Socialist Left in Germany



ultimately gets power, as the struggle is perhaps not yet definitely over, would there not emerge a new great chance if Germany were to turn to the Soviets and join Russia? Hungary is a Bolshevik Republic, Austria is on the verge of becoming a Soviet Republic. If Germany goes Bolshevik, Poland and Czechoslovakia would probably follow suit. Don't you think so?"

"That is the classical Utopia to which our Left still clings," he answered. "But even aside from the question of whether or not the Soviet system is desirable, its realisation is utterly impossible, from a domestic point of view as well as from a foreign point of view. As far as the trend in the country is concerned, I admit that it could have been attempted in November, in the first glow of the revolution. Though I'm by no means certain that we would have succeeded, we had at any rate a chance, provided that the Allies did not intervene—this they would have done, of course. But such an attempt now would cause the most terrific civil war, with all its appalling consequences. And about its outcome there cannot be any doubt. The Allies would march on Berlin, they would occupy the country. They would set up a counter-revolutionary Government. That would be the end of any hope of progress for a generation to come.

"Don't forget," he added, "that the victors in this war were not the French and English people, but the French and English imperialists. Our revolution was frustrated from the outset. We were confronted by hard-boiled imperialists, though camouflaged as democrats. Because they feared Bolshevism, they refused to negotiate with a Government which was not elected by a National Assembly. This is the reason they have not yet even lifted the blockade against revolutionary Germany; they starve her out."

"Now, what do you think will happen in Germany?" I asked.

"Well, she will become a capitalist democracy," he said resignedly. "In some respects she might even become the most progressive capitalist country, but structurally Germany will remain capitalist—until the next opportunity with which history may provide us."

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### THE *ARBEITER ZEITUNG*

"A fever in these pages burns  
Beneath the calm they feign."—Matthew Arnold, *Stanzas*.

NOVEMBER 1, 1919, is an important date in my life. That's when I joined the editorial staff of the *Arbeiter Zeitung*. Its office occupied the second floor of the stately "House of the Party", crowned by two huge statues, carved by Professor Hannak. Small white lacquered doors opening on a long, narrow corridor led to the editorial office. Berticzofer, the editorial secretary, took me along to a tiny, neatly furnished cell which was to become my universe for many years.

"Be worthy of this room," he said. "Reumann and Renner have worked here for years."

Jakob Reumann, a carpenter who became municipal affairs' editor, had moved from this room into the spacious and richly embellished Mayor's office of the Town Hall; he was the first worker to become an Alderman of imperial Vienna and Mayor of republican Vienna. Karl Renner, one of the leader-writers of the paper during the war, had moved from this room into the beautiful small Baroque palace in the Herrengasse in which the Hapsburgs' Prime Ministers had resided for two centuries.

I was familiar with life in the *Arbeiter Zeitung* office long before, ever since I worked in Warnsdorf. Whenever I was in Vienna before and during the war, I always spent some part of my spare evenings in the *A.Z.* rooms. You could be sure of a stimulating talk and could get a little of the inside of great policy and personalities.

That I myself should become a member of that fine team of writers was fixed on my last leave in July 1918. On the day before I left for Cattaro, Otto Bauer had asked me to tea in his flat and had casually inquired about my plans for after the war. I had no particular plans. He then asked me in a matter-of-fact tone whether I would like to work on the *Arbeiter Zeitung*. I think I must have blushed. I only remember having stammered something like, "Do you mean it seriously?" For to be admitted into the Olympus of the Gods whose pronouncements I used to receive with the utmost awe was one of those day-dreams which you cherish just because they are beyond any possibility of materialising.

Otto Bauer apparently mistook my embarrassment, for he

started persuading me. "You'll have a great deal of inspiration from your colleagues," he said. "You'll get to know Victor Adler at home, for he is at home there. Then there is Austerlitz, and the others, and though some of them are perhaps a little curious, they are interesting, all the same."

"Yes, I know, and to work on the *Arbeiter Zeitung* was indeed always my great desire," I replied. "But do you really believe that I'm fit for the job? Frankly I don't feel so."

"Don't talk nonsense! You'll learn it. There is nothing you can't learn," he said encouragingly.

"But, Otto, there is another point—Austerlitz, you know," I said, shaking my head.

Friedrich Austerlitz, Lord of this realm, was of the most impetuous, volcanic temper. In his writing, in his speeches, and even in his intimate talks, he was like a tempest thundering over the fair world. On my very first visit to the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, joining a group standing round Victor Adler in the corridor, we suddenly heard a terrific voice piercing the whole building as though something terrific had happened. I must have looked startled, for Victor Adler remarked, "Oh, don't worry, Austerlitz is just explaining to Engel about a misplaced comma in his article."

"You mean you're afraid of Austerlitz?" Otto Bauer smiled merrily. "Don't worry about him. You will get accustomed to his temper, and then you will see what a man he is. When he shouts, don't pay any attention; it doesn't mean anything. He must shout, otherwise he would burst, such is his temper."

"And now," he concluded, "I take it we have fixed the matter. Adler and Austerlitz want you; we shall need young people on the *Arbeiter Zeitung* after the war."

When I saw Austerlitz that evening, he said to me, "I hope I shall see you back before long, and you know you will have to work with me."

Yet when the war ended and we were faced with the emergency of the collapse of the Empire, and the need of building a new State, there was no question of individual aspirations or inclinations. However much I disliked the political-bureaucratic job in the War Ministry, and however eager I was to exchange the elaborate working-room in the vast palace on the Ring for the humble editorial office, and my rank of Lieut.-Colonel for the rank of the youngest member of the staff of the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, it could not be done. For almost nine months we lived on the verge of a fratricidal civil war, and its prevention required the untiring activity of everyone who owed responsibility to the *Volkswehr*. After the menace had faded we were confronted with the task, imposed upon us by the Peace Treaty, of transforming the tem-

porary revolutionary militia into a more permanent armed force. It was to be a small standing army of 30,000 men. Our task was to devise every safeguard for maintaining the loyal republican character of the military force. We retained the institution of soldiers' councils; we got the soldiers full civil rights, including the right of organisation in a soldiers' trade union; and, above all, we were anxious to take over from the *Volkswehr* into the *Wehrmacht* (as the new military force was called) as many reliable officers, n.c.o.'s and men as possible.

In this task we were greatly assisted by General Theodor Körner, the finest type of the Austrian officer caste I had met. He came from an old officers' family, as the painted, gold-framed portraits on the walls of his flat testified. His ancestors probably fought under Prince Eugen at Zenta and under the Duke of Marlborough at Malplaquet, for some of them wore the embroidered uniforms of that time. Before the war of 1914 Körner was a teacher at the Austro-Hungarian Military Academy, and during the war he was Chief of Staff of Field-Marshal Boroevic's South Army.

One day, a few weeks after we had taken over the War Ministry, he came to see me in my office and asked for an interview with Deutsch. I had never met him before, though his name was known to me.

"You'll understand, of course, I've grown up in monarchical traditions," he said. "But I feel I ought to serve my country now just as I did before."

He impressed me at once by his earnestness and sincerity. We were badly in need of high officers, and were very glad of his offer. After a while we made him Director of the Ministry. That our office was so speedily organised, and that it worked so smoothly, was to his credit. He was a tireless, scrupulous worker; he controlled every department, he knew every officer of rank, he scrutinised every paper produced in the Ministry. He was at his desk at seven in the morning and did not leave it before midnight. His authoritative personality commanded the respect of every one. We found out very soon what a jewel we had got, and we trusted him fully. This general, imbued with Hapsburg traditions, was later to play a part as prominent as it was honourable in our Labour movement.

When the first year of our office drew to its close, after we had secured the passing of the law concerning the *Wehrmacht* and had organised it, I felt that I could now leave the Ministry and join the *Arbeiter Zeitung*. I had written for it occasionally during the war and rather frequently after the war. I now wanted to devote all my energies to writing. Julius Deutsch, however, urged me to

stay on with him and to divide my time between the office and the paper. So I remained for another year in the Ministry, working there from nine to five, while my night hours from five to one in the morning belonged to the *Arbeiter Zeitung*.

The *Arbeiter Zeitung* was a unique paper, not merely in its high intellectual standard, but also in its character. The news was treated rather contemptuously, and occupied accordingly a comparatively small space. What mattered were, in the first place, the articles. There were three, even four or five leading articles, hardly any less than 2000 words, covering the first, second, and frequently the third page of the paper (the advertisements were usually on the back pages). Then there were two or three pages filled with Parliamentary reports or speeches of Socialist leaders at meetings (the reports on Party conferences sometimes covered four or five pages). Then there was always a short story and half a page of a novel in serial form, so the news (domestic as well as foreign) had to be content with the meagre space left. The *Arbeiter Zeitung* could not properly be called a newspaper; it was rather a daily magazine of political and cultural affairs.

Its editorial members were also of a peculiar sort. They were not journalists in an English or American sense; they were rather essayists, and most of them brilliant. Every one of them was a great reader and was something of a self-made expert in one or two spiritual domains. Hugo Schulz, for example, often delighted us with his declamations from the *Odyssey* in Greek, and was a scholar in military history; Karl Leuthner excelled in knowledge of the history of the Catholic Church; Michael Schacherl's hobby was comparative religious thought; Alfred Engel was highly versed in common law; Gustav Pollatschek was a student of Hapsburg history; David Bach was a philosopher and a master in the history of music; and, above all, Siegmund Kunfi was a sociologist of great learning—to name some of the staff. But whatever their hobbies, they were absorbed by political interests and still more by their desire to write fine essays, no matter the topic. Every one felt a calling as a writer and as a servant of the German language. The *Arbeiter Zeitung* was guided by the maxim: style is everything.

Above all of them towered the powerful figure of Friedrich Austerlitz. He was the editor of the paper from the time Victor Adler had founded it (in 1895) until less than three years before it was suppressed by Dollfuss (in 1934). He, too, like most of his colleagues, had no proper education (he had attended only an elementary school), and had acquired his immense knowledge in many spheres of intellectual and political life by self-study. That he knew every minute detail of the contemporary history of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was not very surprising, for he had

commented on it every day during nearly forty years. But quite extraordinary was his knowledge of common as well as constitutional law. His profound essays on legal questions were respected by every lawyer in the country as masterpieces of sagacity and lucidity. His reputation as the first jurist of his time was undisputed, and when Parliament elected this man of most humble upbringing and without any academic distinction a member of the Supreme Court (Constitutional Court), everyone felt that this honour was his due.

He was a man who, like Voltaire, could not suffer injustice, regardless of whether it emerged from public or private life. He would investigate a common law case in which he thought that a legal error had been committed with the same passion as a political case in the courts. He would write thousands of words on an erroneous legal judgment. He wrote, for instance, a series of long articles, defending (successfully) the Belgian King's daughter, Princess Louise of Saxe-Cobourg-Gotha, because he believed that she and her lover had been wronged. His articles during the war on the jurisdiction of the military courts, ill-famed no less for their cruelty than for their frivolity, had greatly contributed to the general hatred and contempt in which the Hapsburg régime was engulfed in the end. Austerlitz was renowned among judges and barristers all over the country as the unimpeachable guardian of justice.

He was of the rare sort of European journalists who felt profoundly the great responsibility of their office. He held, and never tired of preaching, that because journalists wielded such tremendous power for good and evil, their intellectual and moral integrity required a particularly high standard. He appealed unceasingly to their sense of human decency, of fairness, of equity; he fostered their sense of self-control; he above all sharpened their sense for the great responsibility they have to bear in the service of the language. He regarded the careful cultivation of the language as the supreme task of a journalist. Austerlitz' style to-day would perhaps appear as a little too pompous, like Carlyle's style, but his was surely the finest political prose of his time. To him the form was of even greater importance than the idea; he could condone anything, except vulgarity and mediocrity in style. A trivial phrase, or a wrong comma, would evoke his white-hot rage; he would burst into the cubicle of the careless writer and would passionately dissect the wrongly applied expression, often revealing a new meaning of words and phrases which had become petrified by their thoughtless use.

It characterised Austerlitz, the writer and man, that his three favourite authors were Ludwig Börne, Arthur Schopenhauer and

Charles Dickens. Ludwig Börne appealed so strongly to Austerlitz because he was the brilliant champion of German democracy. Schopenhauer, however, appealed to him by the lucidity of his style. Austerlitz combined in his writings a noble passion for freedom with a crystal clearness of expression. But through every line he wrote would ring a chord of deep compassion for suffering humanity. That is why he loved Dickens so much.

Yet this man, with an intense ardour for things noble, was of an incredible ruthlessness in his intercourse with his fellows. He possessed a highly refined taste in literature, often beautifully reflected in his restrained style; he was capable of the most genuine emotions; and yet he was coarse and even violent in his manner. This intractable feature of his temper had its root, I believe, in his voracious insatiability.

He was, in the first place, an insatiable worker. It may appear curious to an English journalist to learn that an editor-in-chief should himself write and edit nearly half of the paper and should personally dictate most of the editorial letters which left the office. Austerlitz, literally, did. Every day he wrote one and sometimes two leading articles; he sub-edited the daily flow of political material; he wrote half a dozen political notes; he read the proofs of everything concerned with policy; he made the lay-out of the paper; he answered almost every letter the paper received. This was his day's work in addition to reading scores of papers. He was a bachelor with no private life. He spent twelve hours a day in the office. He was, moreover, an amazingly swift worker. The words flew from his brain with the same speed as his pen glided over the notepaper, leaving a thin trace of diminutive hieroglyphics which no one could decipher but himself and two compositors (who received an extra bonus of 20 per cent). He needed no more than three-quarters of an hour for writing his leading article, and he would sub-edit a Parliamentary report covering one page of the paper in less than half an hour. The vast editorial work he produced every day was actually accomplished in three to four hours altogether. The remaining time he spent in the office; in conversation and in reading books, often staying until dawn.

But although he could write as much as he liked, and although he actually wrote nearly half of the paper, he was almost unhappy that somebody else wrote anything; he felt somehow robbed of an opportunity. And as it was everyone's ambition to write, he suffered immensely, as he could not help permitting the others to write.

He became a member of the Constitutional Court; he became a member of Parliament (he, incidentally, was an impressive

orator); he sat in the highest councils of the Party. Yet he felt himself frustrated by the work others did.

He was, in particular, envious of Otto Bauer, twenty years his junior, whose genius emerged like a meteor. Otto Bauer was in fact the political and spiritual leader of the Party. Every day, after he returned from Siberia in 1917, he wrote a leading article, usually the first. Bauer was a writer of great splendour and convincing force, and his articles added to the lustre of the paper. Although Otto Bauer always appeared in the office at a quarter to nine, to discuss tactfully with Austerlitz what topic to write about, Austerlitz would only with inner reluctance accept the inevitable. This inhibition to suggest, or even to inspire, ideas for articles others could write was all the more conspicuous towards the rest of his colleagues. So it became the order in the office that everyone who had an idea, and wanted to write, sat down and wrote, and just told Austerlitz afterwards.

Certainly, as the years went by, and Austerlitz aged (in years though not in vigour), his voracity declined. With the utmost effort he contented himself during the last decade of his life with writing only three or four articles a week (in addition to his undiminished editorial work). Sometimes he would even offer his colleagues suggestions for topics. He was thirty years my senior, and so treated me most paternally; he encouraged me as well as his nature permitted; he even made me his deputy only a few years after I had joined the staff. But though he was admired by everyone, he was loved by none. Thus of him could aptly be said what Virginia Woolf wrote of William Hazlitt: he was "ill-conditioned yet high-minded; mean yet noble; intensely egotistical yet inspired by the most genuine passion for the rights and liberties of mankind". When he died, in mid-summer 1931, one of the great European journalists of his time, the greatest who had emerged from my country, had passed away. With his death the *Arbeiter Zeitung* lost the spark and vitality which had distinguished it from all the papers I know.\*

\* A volume of his essays appeared under the title *Austerlitz Spricht*, 1931.



## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### THE PARTY

"Enthusiasm begets enthusiasm."—Longfellow, *Hyperion*.

I HAD THE good fortune to work on the *Arbeiter Zeitung* under Austerlitz for almost a decade; they were, I think, the happiest years in my life.

I experienced that genuine satisfaction which springs from any spontaneous activity and from the expression of what one feels and thinks, even if it is confined to a limited sphere of life. I felt that Socialism was the purpose of my life, and the idea to which I ought to devote my work. Perhaps no paper in the world was able to offer a Socialist journalist purer and more abundant means of self-expression than the *Arbeiter Zeitung*.

It was the Socialist paper *par excellence*. Everything in it was imbued with Socialist spirit and reflected the peculiar climate of the most remarkable Socialist movement between the two world wars. The *Arbeiter Zeitung* not merely recorded every beat of the Party pulse, it also gave that pulse added impetus with its interpretations of the political and spiritual tides of the time. The life of the *Arbeiter Zeitung* was intensely interwoven with the life of the Party; working on the paper meant being in the heart of the movement.

It can be said that the Austrian Social Democratic Party embraced the spiritual and social life of a great community. It was certainly, in the first place, a political movement. But it was more than that. It was like a spiritual movement in which the craving of tens of thousands for the meaning of life found expression and satisfaction. To the great masses of Austrian Socialists the Party meant scarcely less than the Church means to the devout Christian: the vessel of the great idea of humanity. And just as the devout Christian relates everything he does to his Church, so many Austrian Socialists related all their activities, even their hobbies, to the Party.

This explains the profusion of forms in which the movement manifested itself. Almost every field of activity of the individual was integrated in the Party. Cyclists and lovers of music, amateur botanists, chess-players and mountaineers, bird-fanciers, football players, wrestlers and singers formed groups of their own within the movement. Tens of thousands of children belonged to the

groups of "Children's Friends" and "Red Falcons", founded by Max Winter, an editor of the *Arbeiter Zeitung*. Among the finest concerts in Vienna during the twenty-five years up to the time the movement was suppressed by Dollfuss were those which David Bach, also an editor of that paper, organised for workers' audiences. The Socialists had hundreds of their own libraries. They had their own study groups in sociology, psychology, literature and philosophy—the "Free Thinkers Society" had tens of thousands of members. They hired trains and chartered ships to go on holiday in far-away countries. They wanted to live their leisure together. Hitler's "Strength through Joy" was a travesty of our idea of the spontaneous activity of the masses.\*

The foundation of the Socialist people's movement was, of course, the Party itself. Its extraordinary strength placed it after the war in the first rank of the Labour movements of the world. Austria's total population amounted to about 6,600,000. Nearly half of the people lived on the land, and were as strongly attached to the Catholic Church as the workers were attached to the "Socialist Church". Of the 3,000,000 town people accessible to Socialist ideas, no fewer than 600,000 adult persons were members of the Social Democratic Party. In this half-agricultural country with its powerful, age-old political tradition of the Catholic Church, 42 per cent of the electorate voted Socialist at every general election (there were four during the lifetime of the Republic). In Vienna, one in three of its adult population was a member of the Party, and two in three used to vote Socialist.

The political organisation of the Party was distinct from, and

\* Professor F. A. Hayek, in his endeavour to prove his thesis that Socialism must unavoidably lead to Fascism, also appeared unable to see any difference between the Socialist and Nazi "instruments of indoctrination", as, for instance, the Socialist youth movement and the *Hitlerjugend*. But the fact could not have escaped his attention that side by side with the Socialist youth movement in Germany there were plenty of youth movements of other shades (Catholic, Democratic, Nazi, *Stahlhelm*, *Wandervögel*, etc.), while under Nazi rule there was only one. Under the Weimar Republic a Catholic boy had the choice between joining any of them or keeping aloof from all of them; under Nazi rule he had no choice whatever, but had to join the *Hitlerjugend*. The Socialist institutions were voluntary organisations, the Nazis' compulsory. Between the Socialist and the Nazi cultural organisations there is as much difference as between the British trade unions and the "German Labour Front", or between the Press in democratic and the Press in totalitarian countries. The Socialist institutions rest on the free choice, the free will, and the spontaneous activity of their members; while the Nazi institutions rest on the coercive power of the State. Professor Hayek asserts that the Socialists have, "by their organisation of 'cells' and devices for the permanent supervision of private life, created the prototype of the totalitarian party" (F. A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, p. 85, 1944). This assertion has no foundation in fact. Such "cells" and "devices" simply did not exist in the Social Democratic movement of any country.

politically and financially entirely independent of, the equally powerful trade unions.\* Between the political and the industrial wing of the Labour movement there was, of course, close co-operation; but there was no affiliation. The Austrian Labour Party was not composed—as, for instance, the British is—of affiliated organisations, but only of individual members.

The Party, equally distinct from the Socialist cultural and recreational societies, provided a vast domain of creative activity for many thousands of its members. While centralist in its structure, it was based on numerous district groups which were integrated in divisional groups. In Vienna, for example, there were as many as some 240 district groups. Every one of them, composed of about 1000 or 2000 members who mostly knew each other, had a say in public affairs, particularly in municipal affairs. As far as it appears possible to realise democracy in large communities, the Austrian Socialist movement achieved it. In the weekly meetings of these groups every political or administrative question, big or small, which occupied the attention of the Party was exhaustively discussed: the size of the flats erected by the Socialist municipality of Vienna (and many more Austrian towns); the political relations between the workers and the peasants; schemes of public works for the unemployed; suggestions for a new curriculum for the elementary schools; bus fares; the attitude of the Party towards the Soviet Union—in short, everything in which politically-minded people are interested—was examined at these meetings, and after these groups had made up their minds, their delegates to the “Viennese Conference” (which assembled several times during the year), or to the annual Party Conference, hammered out the directives of policy.

There was something like a new civilisation in the making, symbolised in the achievements of “Red Vienna” and in the abundance of new forms of community life in which the Socialist idea expressed itself. It was characterised by a new sense of solidarity and collective responsibility. Every member of the community somehow contributed, or felt he had contributed, his share; either in shaping one of its manifold forms, or in keeping its spirit alive, or in bringing it into being in monumental housing-blocks and schools, in libraries and concerts, in garden cities, in child welfare, in the people’s health services, in people’s

\* In 1928, the Austrian trade unions had 766,168 members; that was more, for example, than the French trade unions counted in the same year, though the population of France was about six times as large as that of Austria. In Vienna alone 423,382 workers were members of the trade unions (that was 55.3 per cent of the total of the Austrian trade-unions members).

universities. The common man in the rank and file felt as much responsibility for the success of the Party (as well as for the Viennese municipality, which he regarded as the crown of Socialist achievements) as for the well-being of his family. He felt the Party was an essential part of his life and the fulfilment of his aspirations.

When he looked at one of the beautifully designed new housing-blocks, he felt he had a share in it. He had strengthened the Party by his work, and so contributed to its power to carry out the vast housing scheme; he had voted the means for the buildings; he had perhaps been present when the plan of this building had been discussed at his group meeting. He regarded this fine edifice as belonging to him and to all, created by the collective endeavour of the Party. And when he walked through one of the newly laid-out gardens, he remembered that his friends in the Town Hall had done it. His boy, he reflected, was training to be a mechanic in the spacious, clean Apprentice School, lately erected by the municipality; he recalled that he himself in his youth had had to work fifteen hours a day in a filthy, subterranean shop as an apprentice without learning anything. How the Party had changed life! Now Vienna was no longer the Kaiser's city and the city of the rich; it was the city of the people. Everything that was done in Vienna was done by the people, through the people, for the people. Everywhere he saw creative activity, the growth of a new community life. There was hope and promise. A feeling of love and pride for Vienna warmed his heart. And just as he felt, so hundreds of thousands felt likewise. For the first time in the history of the Austrian working class there was a popular emotion something like patriotism.

On a previous page I have alluded to the strange fact that the German Austrians were perhaps the only people in Europe who had never known the sentiment of genuine patriotism. If there was anything like Austrian patriotism existent, it was confined to a very small stratum of the Hapsburg Empire; it was essentially an expression of allegiance to the Hapsburg Crown. The Italian, Slav and Hungarian subjects of the Emperor, as well as the bulk of the German middle class of the Dual Monarchy, had developed anti-Austrian nationalist feelings, while the peasants of the Alpine provinces had developed parochial sentiments. The German workers of that multi-nation State, however, abhorred German nationalism as much as they loathed Austrian patriotism. They disliked German nationalism, because it was the ideology of the ruling classes in the factories, and they rejected Austrian patriotism, because it was the ideology of the ruling classes in the State.

There was, also, nothing, or at any rate very little, in the political and cultural history of the Hapsburg realm which was fit to evoke patriotic emotions among the Austrian Germans. Of the three main sources from which patriotism springs—literature, history and common destiny—none was able to generate a particular Austrian patriotism among the working people. German-Austrian literature, however deep its Austrian hue, was conceived as universal German literature, as for example Maria Ebner von Eschenbach, Arthur Schnitzler, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Rainer Maria Rilke; or as German vernacular literature, as for instance Raimund, Nestroy and Anzengruber. Franz Grillparzer, the Austrian classical writer, was far less popular than, say, Schiller or Heine, and the Austrian novelist Adalbert Stifter was far less popular than the Swiss novelist Gottfried Keller.

Nor did Austria's history appeal to the emotions of the common German-Austrian people. British history, for instance, is fundamentally the history of the British people; for centuries it was dominated by the contest between people's rights *versus* King's rights. It was the history of the struggle of free conscience against the State Church and of the power of Parliament against the power of the Crown. At least since Chatham, if not since 1688, Britain's destiny had been moulded and mastered by the people through Parliament, however aristocratic its composition, for, while the common man in England was excluded from power, he was by no means powerless; since Cromwell he had participated in the political and religious struggle of his time and exerted his influence most effectively in the street. The same applied to France, since 1789. Since that year France's history had been the history of the French people, a history of political wars between the people's democracy and royal absolutism, and of class wars between the working class and the middle class.

The history of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, however, was essentially the history of the House of Hapsburg. Only twice in the course of its centuries-old reign did the people themselves appear on the stage of history: the first time, in 1525, when the peasants of Salzburg and Upper Austria together with the miners of Styria and Carinthia rose; and the second time, in 1848, when the people of Vienna rose. Both revolutions were defeated. The first so thoroughly that not a trace of it has remained in the memory of the peasants; the memory of the second, though it was a middle-class revolution, merely caused embarrassment to the middle class of later generations; they did not want to be reminded of having once been revolutionary. Only the Socialists of Vienna, and they alone, kept the memory of 1848 alive. Although

in the 'sixties the Austrian Constitution was embellished with the institution of a Parliament, which was even based, in 1907, on universal franchise, Hapsburg absolutism remained virtually in force until the Hapsburgs' end, in 1918.

The textbooks of Austria's history had thus almost nothing to record about the history of the Austrian people; they merely told the history of the House of Hapsburg. That Austria was great, if not in thought or letters, at least in music, was, at best, recorded incidentally. Archduke Albrecht, who won a battle though he lost the war against Napoleon, was a bigger figure than Mozart in the Austrian annals. If enthusiasm, flowing from history, is one of the generating forces of patriotism, neither the story of the Archduke Albrecht (which found its happy end with the marriage between Napoleon and the reigning Hapsburg's daughter) nor Radetzky's war campaigns in Italy were able to arouse enthusiasm among the Austrian people; and yet the records of these two war lords was the climax of glory Austria had to show during the past century and a half.

The Austrian people did not feel, rightly or wrongly, that they had a common destiny with the House of Hapsburg. They did not care two straws for the Hapsburgs' loss of Lombardy and Venetia in the battles of Magenta and Solferino; nor was there any joy or satisfaction among the common people when the Hapsburgs enlarged their Empire by the occupation, and later by the annexation, of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The peculiar conditions of the rise and decline of the multi-nation Hapsburg Empire precluded the development of a genuine emotion of Austrian patriotism among the Austro-German people.

But now, with the growth of "Red Vienna", local pride began to be felt. It was very different from the sentiment commonly called patriotism. It was, in the first place, free from any trace of nationalism; it did not even embrace the whole country. It was a sentiment of pride in the achievements of "Red Vienna" and the greatness of the Party (for the Socialist Party and "Red Vienna" were for the man in the street identical institutions), a sentiment of love for the plot of soil on which this new society grew. It was not an Austrian, it was a Viennese patriotism.

It is probably true that if the Austrian Republic had been a success it would have generated an Austrian patriotism, just as the success of the Swiss Republic had produced the noble patriotism of the Swiss people, a patriotism free from nationalism, imperialism and arrogance. The Austrian workers, at any rate, felt affection for the newly born Republic, coming into life through their own courage and determination, and shaped by their own

endeavour. They were attached to the State which recognised the working people as equals and realised the duty of society towards the economically weak.

But because the Republic was called into being by the will of the working class and, for a short time, was dominated by the Socialists, and because it cared for the working people by the promulgation of the eight-hour day, unemployment insurance and paid holidays, it evoked the hatred of the anti-Socialists.

Most people in the towns were "red"; but the people in the country were "black"—that is, clerical-reactionary. How little patriotism was alive among the Austrian peasants, and how intense was their hatred of the Socialists, had been demonstrated by the separatist movement, sweeping the provinces after the proclamation of the Republic. The Diet of Vorarlberg decided on joining Switzerland, the Diet of the Tyrol decided on joining Germany, the Diet of Salzburg organised a plebiscite on the question whether that province should join Germany (and a vast majority of the Salzburg people voted in the affirmative); Carinthia, in threatening language, called upon Vienna to keep its hands off Carinthia; the province of Upper Austria closed its boundaries against Vienna and prohibited the supply of the capital with food. The hatred of the "blacks" towards "Red Vienna" almost caused the disruption of the young Austrian Republic.

This hatred was embodied in the Jesuit Prelate, Ignaz Seipel, the virtual ruler of Austria from 1924 onwards; it expressed itself in the formation of the Fascist-monarchist *Heimwehr*, so assiduously fostered by Seipel, and it culminated in Dollfuss' *coup d'état* in February 1934, so ingeniously prepared by Seipel. The Seipel-Austria was, of course, scarcely able to attract the working people's love. The blight of black hatred killed the bud of red patriotism.

But within "Black Austria" were the "red towns" and, above all, "red Vienna". Seipel failed to engender an Austrian patriotism among the workers; "Red Vienna" succeeded. This kind of patriotism transcended Vienna, because it was shared not merely by the Viennese workers, but also by the workers in the smallest hamlet in the Alps. The workers and Socialists in the Austrian provinces looked at Vienna with the same feeling of pride and love as the common people in France, since 1789, looked to Paris as the leader into a happier future.

This feeling of the workers was greatly fortified by their unflinching confidence in the men at the helm.

The Austrian Socialist movement was most fortunate in attracting a number of outstanding figures of great ability and moral strength. There was, in the first place, Karl Seitz, Chairman of

the Party since Victor Adler's death. Every child in Vienna, every worker in Austria knew him. He had grown up in a Viennese municipal hospice for orphans; he became a teacher at a Viennese common elementary school, and later was victimised for being a Socialist. He was one of the first Socialists to become a member of Parliament, where he, a solitary figure in a House of more than 500 anti-Socialists, spoke for Labour. His charm, his popularity and his natural dignity predestined him for the office of the President of the Republic and later, after Reumann's death, for the office of Mayor of Vienna.

Then there was Hugo Breitner, former Director of the *Länderbank*, the most respectable banking house in Austria. He had foregone his big income and his still bigger prospects in order to serve under Seitz as treasurer of the Viennese municipality. When he started work in the Town Hall, Vienna appeared to be a dying city past help. Its buildings and streets were dilapidated, its transport system worn out, its population half-starved and unemployed. He infused new life into the city. In thirteen years' work he built 66,000 flats in scores of vast housing blocks, embellished with sculpture, fountains, lawns and flowers; he built garden cities and some of the finest schools in Europe; he created kindergartens, power-stations and scores of swimming-pools. Everything he did was done in the grand style and with good taste. He actually was the architect of "New Vienna". He devised that ingenious system of social taxation which mobilised the means for his elaborate reconstruction scheme. He was a modern Robin Hood who took from the rich what he gave to the poor. He lived an ascetic life; his heart and soul were solely devoted to the happiness of the disinherited. He combined a profound compassion for suffering humanity with the creative energy of a financial genius. Because he taxed the rich heavily in order to alleviate the lot of the poor, he was hated by the money-bags; all the deeper was the workers' affection for him. The last time I met him was in a dimly lit corridor of the Viennese prison where he, together with Seitz and hundreds of active Socialists, had been put by Dollfuss, in 1934.

Then there was Otto Glöckel, headmaster of a quarter of a million Viennese children. He devised and executed bold schemes of educational reform on a great scale. He made come true what still remains a pious dream in most countries, the equality of educational opportunities for the children of poor and rich parents alike.

There was, to name another of Seitz's outstanding collaborators in the Town Hall, Julius Tandler, then professor of anatomy in the university of Vienna, and head of the Viennese health



service for fourteen years. Because of the original ideas he had put into operation in Vienna he was invited by the Soviet Government, as well as by the Chinese Government, to carry out like schemes in those countries. When he returned from a year in Chungking and Moscow, Dollfuss sent him to prison.

After Victor Adler's death the political and spiritual leadership of the movement fell to Otto Bauer. I know of no political figure with his profound insight into the dynamics of history. To him the class struggle was the supreme moving force of progress, and the revolution an unavoidable and inevitable phase in the historic process. He may have lacked the flexibility required for a successful politician, who manoeuvres, cajoles and intrigues for positions; he was frank and straightforward both in attitude and language. Although he enjoyed the undisputed confidence of the movement, some critics of his leadership complained of his too rigid application of theory to the reality of political conditions. But even if he was somehow wanting in statesmanship—of which I am by no means certain—his inspiration made the Austrian Socialist movement what it was: a community, imbued with the ardour of a great idea. Because he was so profoundly trusted, the Austrian movement never split.

If I were to write a history of the Austrian Social Democratic Party, I should also have to record the achievements of many more men and women, distinguished in particular domains. I should have to tell the story of Ferdinand Hanusch, a weaver, who became Secretary of Social Welfare, and who introduced the most progressive social legislation; I should have to record in detail the extraordinary achievements of Robert Danneberg as Secretary of the Party and collaborator and later successor of Hugo Breitner; I should have to describe the untiring work of Joseph Luitpold Stern, for many years the Secretary of the vast educational organisation of the Party, and later the Director of the Austrian Labour College; I should have to tell the story of Wilhelm Ellenbogen, Alois Pölzer, Therese Schlesinger, Helene Bauer, Käthe Leichter, Albert Sever, and of a hundred other faithful servants of our ideal.

Amid such brilliant brains, the contribution to the common work by people with less ability could be but humble. I found my niche in the Socialist Press. While serving with the Ministry of the Forces I edited two soldiers' weeklies, the *Freie Soldat* and *Licht übers Land* (each with a circulation of about 20,000), designed to acquaint the men in the barracks with the political and spiritual principles of our movement. When, a little later, the *Republikanischer Schutzbund* was founded (a Socialist militia), I launched their monthly, *Der Schutzbund*. Almost at the same time

I took over from Friedrich Adler the editorship of *Der Kampf*, and from Robert Danneberg the editorship of the official monthly of the Viennese Party, *Der Sozialdemokrat*. The latter magazine had a circulation of 450,000. Danneberg had edited it on conventional Party lines; I attempted to present the movement and all it stood for in its emotional aspect.

My ambition went farther. The only Socialist daily in Vienna had been hitherto the *Arbeiter Zeitung*. Its circulation of 90,000 was limited by the high intellectual level of the paper, and by the fact that it was read mainly in Vienna; in the provinces four Socialist dailies were published. The *Arbeiter Zeitung* was unable to compete with the circulation of the cheap popular dailies, papers on the lowest intellectual level. I thought that these detestable papers could be challenged in their own field with another Socialist daily. My suggestion, supported by Otto Bauer and Friedrich Austerlitz, was accepted by the Executive, and I was entrusted with this new enterprise. It was a success from the beginning, thanks mainly to the co-operation of three unfailing friends: Hans Hirsch, a saint in purity of mind and a graceful writer, Schiller Marmorek, a literary critic of great ability, and Karl Ausch, an economist, journalist and, above all, a man with a dynamic force. After four months this new daily, *Das Kleine Blatt*, had reached a circulation of 100,000, and after another six months a circulation of 200,000, equalling the widest circulation of any of the Viennese popular papers. So we had in Vienna two Party dailies, and although the *Arbeiter Zeitung* lost about 10,000 of its circulation, the loss was outweighed by the gain of 200,000 copies by another Socialist paper.

Encouraged by this success, I launched three more Socialist weeklies: first an illustrated paper, then a sort of literary magazine, and finally a radio paper. On the basis of this group of Socialist periodicals I wanted to build a Socialist Book Club, together, if possible, with our Swiss friends, to whom I had suggested the idea. I was expected in Zürich for the discussion of the project on February 14, 1934. Two days before Dollfuss' guns had smashed the movement and its whole cultural edifice.

CHAPTER TWENTY  
TWILIGHT OF SOCIALISM

"Let this pernicious hour  
Stand aye accursed in the calendar."

—Shakespeare, *Macbeth*.

ON THAT 12th of February, 1934, when Dollfuss' guns pounded the fine housing blocks which the Socialist administration had erected, and Dollfuss' police rounded up Socialists by the hundreds, an epoch in the history of Socialism had come to an end. I felt that whatever the chances of a revival of Socialism might be, it would be different in its spiritual and moral conception from the Socialist movement inaugurated by Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* of 1847. The world into which I was born, and the ideas and traditions which I had embraced with so burning a love, had collapsed. Now the "blossoming of life has withered for ever".

Many of my friends, and especially Otto Bauer, had such forebodings as early as 1931. Otto Bauer had expressed his anxiety not merely privately, but also in a truly prophetic speech addressed to the International Socialist Congress in Vienna, midsummer 1931. From the rostrum of the Labour International he appealed to the Western Powers to aid without delay the German Republic which was in the throes of an unparalleled economic crisis. And he predicted that if the Western Democracies should fail German Democracy in its hour of need, Fascism would conquer Germany and unleash war against European civilisation.

To Otto Bauer as well as to some of his friends the coming of another world war seemed inevitable if Fascism gained the upper hand in Germany. Nor did we have any doubt that Fascism, once it dominated Germany, would, before starting war, attempt to, and finally succeed in subduing Austria.

Later, after Hitler's advent to power, Otto Bauer did not believe there would be an intervention of the Western Powers against Nazi Germany. That conservative England should be instrumental in the overthrow of Hitler, an event which was bound to generate the Socialist revolution in Germany, appeared to him beyond credibility. On the contrary, he assumed that Britain's ruling class would play Hitlerite Germany off against the

Soviet Union and, in this game, support Hitler. Yet he foresaw the coming of the moment when German imperialism, embodied in Fascism, would endanger Britain's power position as well, and consequently force Britain, too, into war. Should Europe, for a second time, be ravaged by a major war, the havoc of material and spiritual destruction would be so enormous that little would survive of the civilisation we had known.

That was our feeling even before that Black Tuesday in world history when Hindenburg handed over the destiny of Europe to Hitler.

Now the first act of the tragedy had closed. Germany was in the grip of Fascism, and the Fascist assault on Austria had begun. It was like a nightmare. It could not be true. Yet it was bitter reality. How could all this happen?

On that February 12, 1934, and the days which followed, I had plenty of time to ponder on the appalling catastrophe. In the very first hour of Dollfuss' *coup d'état* I was arrested, together with General Körner, President of the Upper House, and Karl Renner, President of the Lower House, in the office of Oscar Helmer, a member of the provincial Government of Lower Austria. I had been sent by Otto Bauer to Körner, who had negotiated with the President of the Republic about the imminent danger of civil war, to communicate the outcome of the conversation to the Socialist headquarters. While Körner was just reporting on his talk with the President the police stepped into the room and detained all of us. After midnight we were taken by car under heavy escort to the police prison, and each of us was put into a solitary cell.

When I entered the prison I did not think that I should leave it alive. In *Das Kleine Blatt* I had been rather outspoken against the Dollfuss-Fascists before the *coup d'état*. In a signed article I had once indicted my old war acquaintance Captain Fey for plotting to overthrow the Republic. When I met him for the first time in an officers' mess in the Italian Alps, he had wanted to strangle Friedrich Adler. When Dollfuss appointed him Minister of Interior, he wanted to strangle the Socialist movement altogether. Now he had done it, and I was in his hands.

I assumed he also had evidence sufficient, for Fascist courts, to send me to the gallows. Apart from *Das Kleine Blatt* I had edited a kind of illegal weekly, printed in Czechoslovakia and smuggled into Austria. This was at the time when Dollfuss, in preparation for his *coup de force*, had put new restrictions on the freedom of the Press. So we had to go abroad in order to speak freely, unfettered by Dollfuss' censorship. We put out eleven issues of the paper under different names. Dollfuss might have

regarded the language of that paper as somewhat seditious, though it simply reiterated that if he should dare attack the fundamentals of the democratic-republican Constitution of Austria by force, the working class would meet force by force. Finally, three days before the *coup*, Otto Bauer, in anticipation of it, had asked me to draft for that event a Manifesto to the People of the Austrian Republic. There were three typewritten copies of this Manifesto, and when alone in the prison cell I remembered that I had inserted into its text one or two sentences, suggested by Bauer, in handwriting. I managed to destroy one copy of the Manifesto; another copy I had handed over to Felix Kanitz for the printer a few hours before I was arrested; and the third copy was hidden in my office. Lying on a thin straw mattress in the dimly lighted cell, I thought that if Kanitz should be caught, or if the second copy should be found in my office, or if they merely found that I was the editor of the paper printed abroad, surely there was no hope for me. They had slaughtered so many workers; they were badly in need of some of the "Jewish-intellectual inciters" of the "revolt", as Dollfuss diplomatically termed his *coup d'état*.

At any rate, I felt that my end was near. I did not know what was going on outside the cell. I heard the roar of the guns, and I was certain that we could not win the battle. Our movement would be smashed to pieces, and the darkness of Fascism would descend upon the earth. That would mean to me the end of everything, and I did not care for a life which had lost its purpose.

During the next five days, until I was questioned for the first time, I was serene, as probably everyone is who feels that he is inevitably to die. Over and over again I scrutinised my life from my earliest youth until the moment the prison door banged behind me. My thoughts moved from the private sphere of life into the political. What were the real forces which caused this unspeakable disaster to Socialism? Had we erred? Had we just been dreaming Utopian dreams? I recalled my father's saying that they are wont to hang the "world reformers". Now I felt the icy shadow of the gallows upon me.

Yet I knew for certain that we were not Utopians, but that we had seen the world in its complex reality. We aimed, of course, at great things, and surely we had made many mistakes. Perhaps, I reflected, we had also lacked courage. Perhaps we erred when we refused on March 15, 1933, to answer Dollfuss' elimination of the Parliament with an armed insurrection. The day before, the National Executive of the Party (of which I was an *ex-officio* member) met to deliberate how to act should Dollfuss prevent

the session of Parliament (as he had announced he would). There was only one member of the Executive, old Wilhelm Ellenbogen, who pleaded for the use of force, if necessary, against the threatened attempt on democracy. But even Otto Bauer shrank from the fearful consequences of a civil war. He felt that it could not be won by the working-class against the superior material power of the Government, supported as it was by the peasants. Robert Danneberg was asked, instead, to explore once more in conversation with Dollfuss a way out of the deadlock. Next morning, three hours before Parliament was due to assemble, the National Executive of the Trade Union Congress met to take the final decision. Danneberg had seen Dollfuss, who had promised a solution of the constitutional crisis acceptable to the Socialists, by the end of March (needless to say, Dollfuss did not honour his pledge; he even eliminated the Constitutional Court).<sup>\*</sup> Relieved by this promise, the Conference decided to wait. So we repeated the fateful error, committed by the German Socialists in face of Papen's *coup d'état*.

But even if we had avoided the mistake, and even if we had challenged Dollfuss' dictatorship by armed force, was there any chance of breaking it? It is true that while the Conference was in session 20,000 men of the *Republikanischer Schutzbund*, armed with rifles, machine-guns and hand grenades, were standing by in the Viennese districts, eager to fight. There was also not the faintest doubt that the whole Austrian working class would have stopped work immediately if the Executive had called upon them.

Yet every one of us felt, more or less vaguely, that the sword would have failed to cut the knot. However heroically the workers might have fought, Dollfuss would have triumphed in the end, because the Republic was already broken up by the hatred of the peasants and the Catholic Church. Dollfuss merely executed their aims. It was characteristic that the Christian-Social members of Parliament, representing more than a third of the country, accepted willingly the elimination of Parliament. The truth was that the peasants under the leadership of the Church had become Fascists.<sup>†</sup> Surely the fundamental question was whether the acuteness of the tension between the peasants and the workers—that is, between the Catholics and Socialists—was unavoidable.

It was not clear to all the Socialists that the democratic régime

<sup>\*</sup> How Seipel, Dollfuss and Mussolini made Austria Fascist is admirably recorded by G. E. R. Gedyé in his *Fallen Bastions*.

<sup>†</sup> The Fascist attitude which the Vatican adopted after the conclusion of the Concordat with Mussolini is reflected in the Papal Encyclical *Quadragesima anno* of 1931, to which Seipel had contributed.

in Austria could be maintained only if the workers and peasants held this end in common. The rural population amounted to about half of the total. Neither the Social Democrats, representing the industrial workers, nor the Christian Socials, representing the country people, could ever alone obtain a working majority in Parliament. Seipel could rule Austria because he coalesced with the German-Nationalist Party, representing the urban middle class, a party which, though weak in numbers, was strong in influence, for it kept the balance. Yet the Social Democratic Party, representing 42 per cent of the electorate and administering the capital of the Republic and some other cities, was too strong to be ruled without its consent. To the workers it was insufferable that the rural people should decide the destiny of the urban people with a mere majority of 8 per cent.

A case in point was Vienna. The capital of the republic housed about a third of the total population of the country; it was, according to the Constitution, one of the nine federative members which composed the Federative Republic of Austria. Vienna's autonomous rights in taxation and in some other domains of public affairs were exactly the same—no more or less—as the autonomous rights of, say, Vorarlberg, with a population one-sixth that of Vienna. Yet Seipel and Dollfuss claimed the right of Parliament to abrogate fundamental rights of Vienna which every other federative member of the Republic enjoyed. The Socialists who governed Vienna with a two-thirds majority felt unable to accept such a decision. From the fight for the rights of Vienna the bitterness of the struggle between town and country grew.

But this antagonism was essentially an expression of the far deeper dissension in outlook of town and country—that is, of the Socialists and Catholics. Austria was a country of peasants with small or middle-sized holdings,\* the vast majority of which were worked by the peasant families themselves, with perhaps the help of a few hands. The number of capitalist farms was insignificant.† The social and economic structure of Austria thus offered the ideal possibility of permanent co-operation between the workers and the peasants. The Socialists—Karl Renner as well as Otto Bauer—desired such co-operation. Otto Bauer did not merely present the Austrian peasants with the finest book on their own history,‡ but he also offered them in another book the most comprehensive agricultural programme

\* Of some 433,000 holdings no less than 250,000 were under 5 hectar.

† The landed estates comprised in the Republic barely 6 per cent of the total area, and these mostly consisted of mountainous forest land.

‡ Otto Bauer, *Der Kampf um Wald und Weide*.

ever devised by an Austrian student of agriculture. But the Socialist wooing of the peasants failed utterly not only because the Socialists were not able to speak in the language of the peasants, but also because they were unable to accept the peasants' approach to the problems of life.

Why, then, could workers and peasants in Austria not come together and reach a working agreement? The answer, in brief, is because the first were Socialists, and the second Catholics, and that both of them adhered to their faith with ardour, each to his own. In England many devout members of the Church are profound Socialists; in Austria no faithful Socialist would be regarded by the Church as a devout member of its flock (though most of the members of the Socialist Party, and still more of the Socialist voters, were Catholics). Austrian Catholicism was by tradition and circumstances, like Spanish Catholicism, not merely a religious, but also, and even predominantly, a political movement. Austrian Socialism, on the other side, was equally by tradition and circumstances imbued with a religious fervour; it was an outlook on life, a philosophy, a *Weltanschauung*, derived from the modern theory of nature and from Marx's theory of history and economics. Such doctrines appeared heretical to the Church. Monsignor Seipel, certainly an outstanding figure of the Church, perceived in the Austrian Socialist movement something like the revival of the Enlightenment on a mass basis, and he was dismayed. As there was in Vienna secular education, the Socialist municipality removed the image of Christ from the walls of the schoolrooms; as there were tens of thousands of Free Thinkers in the Socialist movement, on Corpus Christi Day many children, decorated with flowers, walked behind red flags in procession through the town instead of walking behind Church flags. And the number of Catholics who registered their resignation from the Church increased to a staggering extent. Seipel might have foreseen the coming of a time when, should the Socialists maintain their influence, Vienna and most of the Austrian towns would have ceased to be Catholic cities. These misgivings might, I think, have prompted him to adopt Fascism with the aim of eradicating Socialism and "making Austria Catholic" once more. Seipel, the son of a hansom-cab driver, lived in monkish austerity; he was disinterested, highly cultivated and humane; and yet I believe he would have been capable of burning alive his antagonist Otto Bauer, whom he profoundly respected and yet hated, as "Red Antichrist". For in Church matters he, like Richelieu, knew no mercy.

How, then, could the peasants become reconciled with the workers? Only, it appears, if the workers would cease to remain



Socialists. The Catholic Church in Austria was, of course, not "persecuted". It had not, however, retained the privileges bestowed upon it by the "Apostolic Majesty" of the Hapsburg Empire. Thus the Church felt itself robbed of its status by the Republic; hence its implacable enmity towards it and the Socialists who upheld it.

It is true that the antagonism between the peasants and workers would probably never have reached the breaking point had Austria not been smitten by a permanent economic depression under which the peasant suffered hardly less than the workers. It is further true that even under the universal misery of the country the Austrian Fascists would not have dared an attempt on the Republic, had they not been encouraged, sustained and armed by a foreign Fascist Power. But however formidable was the intervention both of Mussolini and the Vatican in support of the Austrian Fascists, it was ultimately Hitler's seizure of power which determined the course of events. Dollfuss might have ventured the *coup de force* even if Germany had remained a democratic Republic. But it seems almost certain that even if he had succeeded, he would not have been able to maintain a Fascist régime for long. The Austrian workers, with a democratic Germany at their back and supported, as they certainly would have been, by the British Labour Party and the French Socialists, would have regained democracy, however long the struggle might have lasted.

But Hitler's amazing triumph had fundamentally changed the power relationship between democracy and Fascism in Europe. We had had a semi-Fascist régime in Hungary since 1919, and a full-blooded Fascist régime in Italy since 1922. Neither of these had disastrous repercussions on European Labour. Hitler's advent to power, however, caused a landslide on a gigantic scale. From the moment the Nazis assumed power in Germany I was haunted by forebodings that the European Labour movement was doomed. If Fascism was able to defeat Germany's mighty Labour movement, how small were the Austrian Labour movement's chances of survival.

That Fascism should ever be able to conquer Germany appeared impossible to most of us in Vienna—with the exception of Otto Bauer and Professor Hans Kelsen, who in a talk with me as early as the autumn of 1929 predicted its success with certainty. The prosperous years from 1925 on until the collapse of world economy in the autumn of 1929 had reduced the Nazi movement to a rather negligible factor in Germany's political life. I recall a discussion with Herman Müller at Austerlitz's flat in midsummer 1928, in which he expressed his firm belief

in the stability of the German Republic. "We have passed the climax of our difficulties," he assured us. "Our economy is sound, our system of Social Welfare is sound, and you will see that the Communists as well as the Nazis will be absorbed by the traditional parties." He anticipated a great Social Democratic success in the forthcoming general elections and the return of the Social Democrats to the Reich Government. Indeed, only a few months later Herman Müller assumed the office of the Chancellor of the Reich for the second time.

But a year after the Social Democratic victory the world was shaken by the sudden slump in Wall Street. Less than six months later the Nazis gained their first important success at the general election. And yet, however imminent the Nazi menace appeared, only a few of us were courageous enough to face it frankly. Most of us tranquillised our anxiety with the saying: "It can't happen in Germany", for "Germany is not Italy".

Was it conceivable that the millions of Social Democrats, Communists, Catholics and Liberals, well organised in parties and trade unions of half a century's standing, could be subdued by these detestable Brown-Shirts, led by a brazen adventurer, whose

". . . glassy essence—like an angry ape,  
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven  
As make the angels weep!"

The conquest of Germany by a dictatorship appeared to us as unlikely as the establishment of Bonaparte's royal Dictatorship seemed to Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson had lived in France for five years before the storm of the Bastille in July 1789. He had studied the French people with the utmost interest, and from what he knew of the French character he did not believe that a monarchy could be re-established in France. "If Bonaparte declares for Royalty . . . he has but a few days to live. In a nation of so much enthusiasm there must be a million Brutusses who will devote themselves to death to destroy him," he wrote in 1800.\* But only a little later he came to the conclusion that it could happen not only in France, but also in America "when our Bonaparte (Jefferson meant Hamilton), surrounded by his comrades in arms, may step in to give us political salvation in his way". We were still ignorant of the modern technique of demagoguery and the dynamics of power as an instrument of a minority to enforce its rule upon a vast majority.

It is true that when Germany's economy deteriorated and

\* Jefferson's Papers, vol. X, p. 151, quoted by Gilbert Chinard, *Thomas Jefferson*, p. 359.

millions of workers were unemployed, the political situation appeared extremely gloomy. It is also true that the rift between Social Democrats and Communists paralysed the strength of the workers' resistance to Fascism. But however deep was the discord between the two wings of Socialist Labour, we clung desperately to the hope that now, in face of so deadly a threat, they would reunite.

The split in the Labour movement had grieved me ever since 1919. Some of the first members of the Austrian Communist Party were most intimate friends of my youth. We had worked together in the Socialist youth movement; we had read the same books and had discussed them nightly: with like enthusiasm we had adhered to the Social Democratic Party.

Now they hated the Party; they hated its leaders whom they had once much admired; they hated, above all, their friends of yesterday who had kept their faith in the old Party and in its leading men.

It was an intensity of hatred I had not known before. Old friends of mine with whom I had lived spiritually for a decade, old friends of mine who had known all my thoughts and aspirations, would now ascribe the basest motives to my attitude. They would question my sincerity; they would call me an apostate and a traitor to the ideals of my youth; they would accuse me of having sold myself and the Labour movement to the despised enemies of the working class.

I knew that most of them were decent and honest men. All the more astonishing was the fury of the hatred with which they were obsessed, a hatred which blinded them and their like all over the Continent and cast them for a rôle in which they became, unwittingly of course, instrumental in a major catastrophe of humanity. For the split in the European Labour movement was undoubtedly a main factor in the rise of Fascism, which in turn plunged the world into the Second World War.

The war policy of the Socialist parties in 1914 had sharply divided Socialist opinion everywhere. In Germany the movement was torn into two parties.

In the first glow of the revolution, in 1918, when Labour was confronted with problems entirely different from those of the war, it appeared as though the rift would be swiftly healed and Labour reunited.

Yet the cleavage of the Labour movement had produced in every camp its own peculiar mentality. The bitterness of the internecine struggle between the two wings of the Labour movement not merely poisoned its spirit, but also accentuated its contradictory tendencies: the reformist tendency stiffened in

the Right, the revolutionary tendency gained momentum in the Left. Ideologically and politically, both wings moved apart to their extremes and enlarged the abyss between them.

It might be that if it had been possible to avert the split of the Labour movement during the war, the aspirations, springing from the revolutionary tide after the war, might somehow have eliminated, or at any rate greatly mitigated, the ideological antagonism within the working class.

This was the case in Britain and Austria. In these countries the Left obtained ascendancy in the movement, and the Right submitted to the prevailing mood of the workers. Thus in Austria as well as in Britain the Communist movement soon receded and remained insignificant. The Austrian Communists, for instance, were never able to obtain a single seat in Parliament or in the Viennese municipality, nor did they ever gather more than 22,000 votes, as compared with the one and a half million votes the Socialists gained.

In Germany, however, the discord had engendered such profound mutual suspicion and hatred that the first attempt, in 1918, to reunite the German Labour movement, at least in action, if not in organisation, soon failed, and the struggle flared up with unparalleled violence. Its domestic issue was widened to a world issue by the establishment of the Third International.

Lenin had founded the Third International for a very definite purpose: to serve as an instrument of World Revolution. He wanted World Revolution not in the remote future. He urged it as an immediate, most pressing need, for he believed that the Russian Revolution, which embodied all the Socialist aspirations, would be unable to survive if it were not joined by a Socialist revolution in one or two of the big industrial countries, at least in Germany.

But when the Third International came to life, actually at its Second Congress in July 1920 (for the First Congress in March 1919 was attended only by a few foreign delegates), the conditions for a World Revolution were no longer present. The Second Congress, in its statement on policy, still proclaimed: "The world proletariat is faced by decisive struggles. The epoch in which we live now is the epoch of direct civil wars. The decisive hour is approaching. In nearly every country where a strong Labour movement is existent, the working class is confronted with a series of bitter fights with arms in hand." But this statement was no longer in accord with the objective facts. In England and in France there never were "revolutionary situations"; in Germany the revolutionary forces had been crushed in the

revolt of the Spartakists and the Bavarian Soviet Republic; in Hungary Horthy's counter-revolutionary White Terror reigned; in Austria the working class had definitely rejected Bolshevism. Only in Italy were the workers swayed by a revolutionary mood, which culminated in the workers' occupation of factories in September 1920; but that revolutionary action did not generate a revolution.

And so Lenin's attempt, in the summer of 1920, failed to rekindle the revolution in Germany by a thrust of the Red Army towards Warsaw. Even Trotsky admitted, after the event, that when the Second Congress met there was a feeling among the delegates that it would not be possible "to overthrow the bourgeoisie by a single stroke in a few weeks or months . . .".\*

When, a year later, the Third Congress of the Communist International met, in surveying the events between the two Congresses it admitted that "this mighty (revolutionary) wave did not wash away either world capitalism or even European capitalism. . . . During the year between the Second and the Third Congress of the Communist International a number of risings and struggles of the working class ended with defeats. . . . The self-confidence of the bourgeoisie as a class, and the outward cohesion of their instruments of State, has undoubtedly been strengthened." Moreover, in the most important countries, such as Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Holland, Belgium, Austria, Sweden, Switzerland and Denmark, the Communist parties were reduced to powerless minorities; they had once and for ever lost the chance to gain the confidence of the workers. In 1921 it was abundantly clear that Lenin's concept of the World Revolution would not materialise.

Lenin had split the European Labour movement because he wanted the World Revolution. He had no faith in the revolutionary spontaneity of the workers; he regarded them in the mass as "trade-unionist minded",† and the old traditional Socialist parties of the Continent, democratic in structure as they were, as the main obstacle on the road to the revolution. He asserted, therefore, the need to split the traditional Labour parties into their reformist and revolutionary parts, and to organise the revolutionary Socialists on the pattern of the Bolshevik Party on an international scale.

In Lenin's conception the Bolsheviks had to operate as the *avant garde* of the workers and the peasants alike. They had to work as the shock-troops of the revolution, and by their revolu-

\* Leon Trotsky, *Die neue Etappe, die Weltlage und unsere Aufgaben*, 1921, p. 59.

† Lenin discussed this theory in his *Was tun?*, *Lenins sämtliche Werke*, vol. IV/2, p. 159 ff.

tionary ardour and action carry with them the broad masses of the working people of the towns and the country.

This conception had succeeded in Russia. Lenin was convinced that it would also succeed in Germany and everywhere else.

Yet his grandiose scheme of World Revolution had utterly failed. Lenin immediately grasped this hard fact. He realised that he could not expect any help for Russia from revolutions abroad. With his acute sense for realities, he introduced without further delay the N.E.P. (New Economic Policy).

This was the historic moment for the liquidation of the Third International. It had lost its purpose. Still more, its presence prevented the re-unification of Labour—that is, of the one world-wide mass movement whose sympathies were with Soviet Russia.

The need for working-class unity, nationally and internationally, was all the more urgent because, while there was nowhere any acute revolutionary situation, the world was still in a state of turmoil, offering immense opportunities to a united working class for increasing its power. Lenin himself appeared to have been in doubt as to the future of the Communist International. Indeed, its Executive proposed to the Social Democratic Parties and Trades Unions a “united front” for the common aims in the day-to-day struggles of the workers.

The consistent and sincere application of the “united-front tactics” would undoubtedly have led to the dissolution of the Communist parties. If the Communists had abandoned the method of the *coup de force*, as they practically did after the abortive rising of the German Communists in 1921, and confined their activity to the endeavour to gain the maximum of power, influence and material improvements for the workers, as the Social Democrats did, there would have been no further justification for separate Socialist parties. Communists and Social Democrats, in working together honestly, would have merged into a single movement.

Had that happened, how different would have been the picture of the world of to-day! In Germany a united working-class movement would have regained and retained the political predominance which it obtained in 1919. The strong influx of Left-wing Socialists (Communists and Independents) into the common movement would have altered the spirit and attitude of the Right-wing Social Democrats. Hindenburg would never have been elected and would never have had any opportunity to betray the Republic; and Hitler would never have ascended to power. There would certainly have been a Nazi movement, just as France had her *Croix de Feu* and Belgium her Rexists. But the Nazis would never have gained power, because in face

of a strong united Socialist movement the Nazi appeal would have found an incomparably weaker reception in the lower middle classes, while at the same time the weight of working-class influence on the economic policy of the State would have alleviated the economic crisis on which the Nazi movement had fattened. The unspeakable catastrophe to Democracy and Socialism would have been averted.

It was a tragedy of the first order that Lenin lost his working capacity by a serious illness in 1922 and died at the beginning of 1924. He possessed the greatness of stature and the moral authority to solve the most intricate problem of working-class unity.

After Lenin's death Stalin, entangled in a complicated maze of contradictions, apparently needed the presence of the Third International as a symbol of the Bolshevik Revolution. The Russian people, who had to endure famine and tribulation, were expected to derive fortitude from the admiration received from the Communists of all countries. The Communist International, which had ceased to serve as an instrument of World Revolution, had now to serve as a source of moral strength, fortifying the self-confidence of the Russian working men.

The split in the German Labour movement thus persisted, and the antagonism between its two wings increased with the growing intensity of the economic crisis. The millions of embittered unemployed flocked into the Communist ranks, and, to retain them there, the vehemence of the Communist attacks against the Social Democrats waxed.

The German Social Democrats were now assailed by the Right and by the Left, by the Nazis and the Communists as well. In this life-and-death struggle the destiny of the Weimar Republic was at stake, for the Social Democrats were the main social force on which it depended.

In this crisis of the Weimar Republic a truly disastrous idea gained ascendancy among the German Communists. They had learnt in the course of fourteen years that standing alone they were not in a position to eradicate the Social Democrats. The Social Democrats remained the strongest working-class party, and the ups and downs of the Communist movement (as well as of the Nazi movement) corresponded with the curve of employment. They knew that should the economic depression pass, the Communist and Nazi movements would again recede. But now the curve of employment had steeply declined. Now six or seven million workers were unemployed. It appeared as though the whole economic fabric of the country would collapse. The peasants revolted, the lower middle classes were haunted

by the fear that a new inflation, such as they had experienced in 1923, would deprive them of their savings and reduce them to destitution. Now the Communists considered that the great opportunity for the destruction of the Social Democratic Party presented itself. If in a concerted attack together with the Nazis the Weimar Republic could be overthrown, the Social Democratic Party would fall with it.

The Communists did not, of course, want a Nazi régime. All they wanted was the end of the Social Democrats. They were fully aware that the Nazis would suppress their own Party as well as the Social Democrats. But they firmly believed that Hitler's advent to power would swiftly be followed (they assumed in three or four months' time) by a Socialist revolution under Communist leadership, which would crush the Nazis finally. Then the new Germany, emerging from that revolution, would be a Communist Germany.

It was a fantastic political scheme, but it determined the attitude of the German Communists and the Third International. A few years later, after my arrival in England, a Communist comrade who was in a position to know confirmed the impression which I had received in Vienna of the motives of the Communist tactics. He admitted that the representatives of the German Communists had actually proposed this course of policy, and that the Executive of the Communist International, relying on the advice of its German section, had approved it.

Now the Juggernaut of persecution was driving through Austria as well, as was to be expected. Meditating about all these things, I wondered why Dollfuss or Fey, who had sent so many to death, should not hang me as well?

"A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch,  
Incapable of pity, void and empty  
From any dram of mercy."

Well, they did not send me to the gallows for two reasons: first, because the British and French Governments, pressed by the Socialists and the public opinion of these countries, peremptorily bade Dollfuss to stop hanging; and secondly, because "the best police of the world", as they acclaimed themselves, did actually know nothing of my activities beyond my editing *Das Kleine Blatt*. After they had detained and questioned me in a police prison for seven weeks, they put me into an ordinary prison, where I was to be tried by a special court for high treason.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

### AFTERMATH

" . . . a mighty darkness, and a sorrow without a voice."

—De Quincey, *Autobiography*.

LIFE IN the ordinary Austrian prison was not too bad. The cell into which I was ushered, built for ten, was actually populated by twenty-six prisoners (Dollfuss had increased the numbers of political prisoners so enormously that all cells in the country were overcrowded). About half of them were charged with theft, fraud or forgery; the other half were Dollfuss' victims, mostly members of the *Republikanischer Schutzbund* who had so bravely defended the democratic Constitution of the Republic. So, after a period of solitary confinement, I was now in the best society I could wish.

There were also other changes for the better. In the police prison I was in the hands of my hated enemies, who knew no law. There I was questioned by police officials, not by the magistrate; I was not told the offence for which I was detained; I was not even allowed to see my lawyer. In the ordinary prison I was, after all, in the hands of a court, and however servile it was towards the Fascist régime (it sentenced to death or hard labour everyone the Government wished), it kept at least a semblance of legality. So in the ordinary prison I was released from the tormenting uncertainty of my fate, because the examining magistrate notified me duly, according to law, within twenty-four hours after I was handed over, why I was committed for trial—namely, on a charge of high treason, the "evidence" for which were some articles, unimpeachable from any legal angle, which I had written. I knew now that the charge was merely a flimsy pretext for keeping me out of the way (as was the case with so many hundreds of my comrades).

In the police prison I was held in strict confinement; I was not even allowed to receive papers, and the police officials and guards were not distinguished by an exceptional soft-heartedness. Among them, however, were one or two decent fellows who were ashamed of being the tools of a brigand government and who, to relieve their bad conscience, would occasionally whisper in my ear some of the latest news. It was one of them who let me know that Otto Bauer, for whom I cared most in these days of trial,

was able to escape abroad at the last minute. This news was a great relief, because I was certain that, if Dollfuss had caught him, he would not have bothered about "evidence"; he would have hanged him straight away.

The guards in the ordinary prison were, however, for the most part in full sympathy with the Dollfuss prisoners and eager to help them as well as they could. After all I had experienced in the police prison, it was a pleasant surprise to be welcomed by the head of the guards, to whom I was handed over, with the well-meant exclamation, "Oh, you're Mr. Braunthal? Well, we will look after you." And so he did, and most of the guards did too. I was not only provided—as was everyone—with any paper I wanted, but I also received promptly every issue of the clandestine *Arbeiter Zeitung* (edited by Otto Bauer in Brno) and every clandestine leaflet and pamphlet immediately after it was issued by the Socialist underground organisation. Moreover, every Thursday, punctually at 3 p.m., a higher official of the prison administration would come to fetch me from the cell and take me to his office. There I would find assembled a number of my friends (imprisoned like myself), among them always Robert Danneberg (who, in prison, remained the ideal Party Secretary, taking care of each and all of us). Then the official would leave his office, lock it and leave us alone for an hour's hearty chat. We could thus freely discuss everyone's case; we could compare the questions put forward by the examining magistrate to each of us, and could prepare our defence. Through that most considerate official Danneberg maintained contact with the outside world, and even with Otto Bauer in Czechoslovakia. Minor guards would occasionally arrange to take me through the corridor just at the moment when they knew that some of my friends would pass. Thus I had "chance meetings" with Seitz, or Ellenbogen, or some other members of the Executive. And so I was not so lonely in the prison.

Now, after seven weeks of confinement, I learned for the first time something of the story of the civil war. Among my cell-mates were members of the Republikanischer Schutzbund who had taken part in the fight and had been arrested only one or two weeks after its end. They told me how aghast they had been at seeing that the working people did not join the fight. There was not even a general strike in Vienna. The railways ran punctually, and the morning after the fight began, all the daily papers (with the exception, of course, of the Socialist, which had been suppressed) appeared as usual. The workers went to their shops as though nothing had occurred. With dumb curiosity and at a distance those who were workless watched the Dollfuss artillery pound the housing blocks which the *Schutzbund* defended.

How was the inactivity of the working people in face of such a mortal threat against their freedom to be explained?

Through the last forty years the Viennese workers had never failed the cause whenever it was endangered. No sacrifice was too great, no menace too formidable when they were called upon to meet it. Their devotion to the Party was boundless, their sense of solidarity was unmatched, their record magnificent. How, then, did it come about that they failed the cause when everything was at stake?

Only a few weeks before, 1000 delegates of the Viennese factories and Social Democratic groups met in the big hall of the Favoriten Worker's House to discuss what their policy should be if Dollfuss should proceed in making Austria Fascist. The assembly (which I attended) was in a grave and passionate mood. Dollfuss had step by step crippled the rights and liberties of the people. After he had eliminated Parliament, he eliminated the Constitutional Court, the last legal body for the maintenance of the Constitution; he reigned by unconstitutional decrees; he had restricted the freedom of the Press; he had deprived the soldiers of their civil rights; he had infringed the autonomous rights of the city of Vienna and had despoiled it of a considerable part of its revenues; on the May Day he had prohibited the workers' May Day procession (the Viennese people's greatest festival for forty-two years, which not even Hapsburg governments ever dared to thwart) and he had transformed the centre of the city through which the May Day procession traditionally used to march into a fortress bristling with barbed wire and machine-guns. He had provoked the Socialists by words and deeds. How far did he intend to go? The workers feared that he would abolish Vienna's autonomy as well, that he would dispose of Karl Seitz as mayor of the city; and suppress the Party and the trade unions. Deeply alarmed that Austria might become the prey of an undisguised Fascist régime, the delegates impatiently urged the Executive to take up the challenge.

Otto Bauer, spokesman of the Executive, had to face the storm. In a moving speech he made it clear how heavy was the responsibility the leadership of the working-class movement had to bear. "So long as there is the slightest chance of averting the horror of civil war, we are bound," he said, "by honour and conscience to take it; we must not be responsible for a single son a mother might lose in a battle if it can be humanly avoided. But," he went on, "there are limits to what self-respecting men can endure. Whatever Dollfuss has done up to now may be retrieved in a more favourable situation, so long as the foundations of the Constitution remain on the whole intact and so long as the work-

ing-class organisation persists. Should Dollfuss, however, lay hands on the essentials of freedom in Austria, on Vienna's autonomy, or on the Social Democratic Party, or on the trade unions, or on the freedom of the Press, then," Otto Bauer stated, "we will fight to the last ditch." And when he concluded his speech with the clarion call: "Rather death than slavery!", the 1000 delegates sprang with one accord to their feet, raised their fists to heaven as though swearing an oath, and cries thundered through the hall: "Freedom! Freedom! Freedom! Rather death than slavery!"

What made their spontaneous pledge empty words when the bitter hour of trial arrived?

Between Hitler's rise to power and Dollfuss' *coup de force* thirteen months had lapsed. The Austrian workers had with the utmost sympathy watched the German workers' struggle against the Nazis before their victory. They had cheered the fortitude of the German workers, who with almost 8,000,000 votes had defied Hitler after he had assumed power. They firmly expected that in the course of the following few months a wave of strikes and insurrections would ultimately break Hitler's régime.

However, the German workers remained quiet. Hitler suppressed the trade unions, the Social Democratic Party, the Press of the Left. Yet the workers did not fight. The Austrian workers did not feel that their German comrades were cowards or traitors; they only felt that the odds of the formidable coercive machinery of the Fascist State weighed against the unarmed working class so heavily as to foredoom any attempt at open resistance. They had seen the extermination of the Socialist movement in Italy eleven years before; they had seen the extermination of the once-powerful German Labour movement now. They felt profoundly disappointed and discouraged.

This feeling of desolation grew all the deeper by the evasive tactics of the Party Executive towards the rising tide of Austrian Fascism. What the workers saw was that the Party yielded step by step to Dollfuss' infringement of their rights. Some of them entirely lost confidence in the Party as a fighting movement; others derived from the policy of the Executive the confirmation of their own impression that the particular conditions had deprived the movement of its striking power. The Executive never yielded without some struggle. But the Party's struggle was confined to the constitutional means of protests and threats at meetings and in the Press; it hesitated to proceed to unconstitutional means. So Dollfuss' cunning war of nerves, as well as the weak response to it by the Party, paralysed a working class impoverished by years of unemployment and disheartened by the triumph of the Fascists in Germany.

There were two other reasons which perhaps accounted for the inactivity of the working masses in the hour of the crisis.

The first was the division of labour within the movement. The task of defending the Republican Constitution with arms was allotted to the *Republikanischer Schutzbund*. Julius Deutsch had brilliantly organised and armed that semi-military body. But though he was a good war minister of the working class, he desired to be also its general (for which he was apparently not competent). He disregarded General Körner's strategical advice to prepare a *levée en masse* for the defence of the Republic; he insisted upon his own strategy, based only on the forces of the *Schutzbund*. So when the call for the battle rang, the workers left the job to the *Schutzbund*, as they had always been taught. The *Schutzbund* troops did their duty most heroically; but alone they were not able to defeat a superior enemy.

The other reason was the centralist structure of the movement and its discipline. Although the local groups of the Party had a wide latitude of action, and the individual members had full scope for initiative, important decisions affecting the whole movement could naturally be taken only by a central body. In the past, serious setbacks had sometimes been caused by the well-meant initiative of individual groups or members. The more critical the situation became in the country, the more anxious was the appeal of the Party leaders to the rank and file to abide strictly by the law of discipline. So it came about that just when spontaneous actions on the part of individual members were badly needed, they were wanting. Dollfuss had within a few hours, in a sudden attack, arrested the heads of the political and industrial wings of the Labour movement. There was no body existent with authority to issue orders for the general strike and for the insurrection. So the workers did not strike and did not fight.

The crux of the problem was that the modern Social Democratic movement was in tradition, spirit and structure no instrument of insurrection. It is conceivable that a workers' mass party, imbued with an ardent fighting spirit, might under certain conditions resort to civil war. But it will triumph only if it rises against a government whose power has deteriorated and whose armed forces have become unreliable. All the victorious political, social and national revolutions in Europe and Asia since the Paris Commune in 1871 bear testimony to this thesis. Conversely, neither the Italian Fascists nor the German Nazis obtained power through insurrection. Both their armed forces were unavailing in face of the power of State. To both the power was surrendered by treacherous heads of States.

This theory was confirmed by two classical examples.

The first is the revolution in Spain, in April 1931. Municipal elections revealed a Republican majority, at least of the urban population. The King would undoubtedly have disregarded it but for the attitude of the armed forces. He abdicated immediately, however, when he was informed by the generals that the army and gendarmerie were no longer reliable instruments of the Crown.

The second example is the Nazi revolt in Austria, in July 1934. Dollfuss' régime rested on a very small social basis. The workers had remained Socialists, the lower middle class and a considerable part of the peasant youth had gone over to the Nazis. It can fairly be said that at least two-thirds of the Austrian people hated the Dollfuss dictatorship. The Nazis who rose in arms against it had been lavishly provided with weapons and money by Hitler; their organisations had penetrated the whole machinery of State; they had excellent military training; they were fanatics; they were backed by the vast moral power of the German Reich. Their attempt, however, failed, because Dollfuss' grip upon the forces of the State was still firm; the troops accepted the orders of the Government.

But graver than the problems of military defeat was the question of whether the universal defeat of Socialism, accomplished by the defeat of the German Labour movement, was not in the last resort the outcome of a decay of the Socialist idea. It was this question which occupied much of my thoughts. I myself, like so many of my friends, was occasionally visited by a disquieting feeling, caused by the diminishing effect of the Socialist appeal to the youth, even at a time when the Socialist movement still stood firm and proud, surrounded by the splendour of its achievements and institutions, and imbued, as it appeared, with an intoxicating spirit of enthusiasm.

The first shock to confidence came in August 1914, when so many Socialists of so many countries abandoned the very essence of the Socialist idea, its universalism. Almost at once it became clear that the fabric of the Labour movement had grown so deeply into the capitalist-national fabric of the class-State that in essential matters both their interests became identical. Something like "vested interests" had developed within the Labour movement. There were large trade unions with huge funds; there were the workers' co-operatives, closely associated with the industrial and political movement, in which many millions were invested; there were printing plants and paper-publishing houses owned by the Party; there was a host of secretaries, clerks and officials who administered the workers' insurance and welfare

institutions. The enormous fabric of the modern Labour movement, particularly in Germany, produced a bureaucracy with its peculiar psychology: conservative in its tendencies and opportunist in its character. The institutions of the Labour movement which had to serve a higher purpose became an end in themselves.

After the war, when Labour's influence in society had so greatly increased, the bureaucratic body of the Labour movement increased correspondingly.\* The domains of Labour activity transcended the vastly grown fabric of the Labour movement. Labour now controlled and administrated towns and cities, provinces and even States.

This growth was certainly healthy. It was a necessary and, in any case, unavoidable corollary of the development of democracy and the spread of the Socialist idea. It also yielded a rich harvest in immense improvements in the workers' cultural level and their general conditions of life. But it fostered, at the same time, the bureaucratic psychology within the movement, its conservative tendencies and its opportunist character.

No modern Labour movement is conceivable without a bureaucracy; it needs a professional body of administrators and "managers" to run the manifold political, cultural and economic institutions of the movement. And the faster the movement grows in width and depth, the faster the professional body of the "managers" grows.

The most serious as well as the most intricate problem with which every Labour movement (like every democratic community, big or small) is confronted is how to prevent the "managers" from becoming the masters—that is, how to prevent the bureaucratic psychology from prevailing over the Socialist.

The "manager" running a town, or a trade union, or a Party printing plant, is naturally inclined to regard the enterprise of which he is the servant as the core of the world; he is so deeply immersed in his enterprise, and so greatly absorbed by its peculiar aspects, that the universal aspect of the movement loses its meaning; to him it is, at best, a symbol, but not a reality.

All the stronger is the need for keeping alive the pure spirit of Socialism among the rank and file, and for subordinating the special interests of the bureaucracy to the universal interest of the Socialist movement.

\* According to A. Ramos Oliveira, the staff of the German Social Democratic Party and of the trade-union bureaucracy amounted to more than 300,000 salaried employees before Hitler's rise to power. Of the 300,000 employees 52,650 were concerned with management, 162,325 were officials and secretaries, and the rest printers, transport workers, typists, clerks, etc. The employees of the workers' co-operative are not included in these figures.—A. Ramos Oliveira, *A People's History of Germany*, p. 174.

But what is the "spirit of Socialism"?

The "spirit of Socialism" is not of divine origin; the Socialist idea is neither a revelation nor a dogma. Socialism as an idea embodies a few principles; Socialism as a living spirit is the application of these principles to the complex of political, economic and moral problems with which society is confronted. When the Socialists, in 1914, confronted with the political and moral problems of the war, decided (in their majority) for the "*sacred union*" with their imperialist-nationalist *bourgeois* against the principle of the international solidarity of the working classes of all countries they betrayed the spirit of Socialism. The bureaucratic psychology had triumphed over the Socialist psychology.

It is, of course, a truly formidable task to apply the principles of Socialist policy to the vast network of conflicting interests which run through the whole gamut of society. It requires study, perception and interpretation. The strength of Socialism as a guiding force before 1914 derived from the Socialist perception and critique of the time. It was the immense work of the Socialist critique which before 1914 guided Socialist policy. The writings of Kautsky, Hilferding, Bauer, Plekhanow, Max Adler (to name at random a few of the host of Socialist authors) were sources of knowledge as well as of inspiration. Socialism before 1914 was a message of new hope in the tired heart of mankind.

The war of 1914 caused a deep breach in the tradition of Socialist learning and thought, at any rate as far as the Austrian school of Socialism was concerned.

It could be observed that the intelligentsia who joined the Austrian movement after the war lived in a somehow different intellectual and moral climate. It appeared as though they had derived their Socialist impetus not from Karl Marx, but from Karl Kraus, a Viennese writer with an abundance of bitter sarcasm and an utter dearth of human wisdom and political character, who wooed now the aristocracy, now the workers, now Dollfuss' Fascism. Yet it was Kraus' mighty pacifist appeal during the war \* which had awakened in many middle-class intellectuals a sense of social responsibility. Some of them joined the only pacifist movement in the country, the Social Democratic Party.

Yet they entered it at a moment when the world into which they had been born was shattered. Its political and social fabric had been broken to pieces, its age-old values had evaporated, even the eternal laws of the universe were no longer true. Ein-

\* Karl Kraus, *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*, a most remarkable dramatization of the contemporary spirit, but hardly understandable to a public which is not intimately familiar with the Viennese Press and the personalities of the time.



stein told the world that two lines running apparently parallel are in truth converging. And Lenin upset another appletart by teaching that civil liberties are only "*bourgeois* prejudices" and that the emancipation of the working class must not, as Marx understood it, be achieved by the efforts of the workers themselves, but by its "*avant garde*".

The pre-war tradition of Socialist thought provided at any rate firm ground to stand on; it offered a viewpoint for the perception of the world in convulsion.

To the post-war intellectuals the pre-war tradition of Socialist thought was more or less unknown, though they swiftly acquired its phraseology.\* They approached the movement with something of Kraus' sophistication, scepticism and cynicism. Most of them were diligent, some of them brilliant writers, and certainly all of them devoted to the cause. But to them the cause was not embodied in the Party. The humble passion which had warmed it before the war was an alien sentiment to them. When its organisation was crushed, in February 1934, some of them went over to the Communists overnight and a few of them even entered the service of the Dollfuss Fascists. The majority of the faithful abandoned the old Party (which had to go underground) and founded a new one, called the Revolutionary Socialists. It was a grievous blow to me when I received the news in my prison cell that the leading body of the Socialist underground movement had decided to mark the breach with the Party of Victor Adler, Friedrich Adler and Otto Bauer by a change in its name. Many Socialist parties on the Continent had been suppressed; but none had, when driven underground, so ostentatiously disavowed its past and tradition.

It appears that the deterioration of the moral atmosphere of the Socialist movement had somehow affected its intellectual atmosphere. It is characteristic that not a single Marxist contribution to social science had been produced by any Austrian intellectual who had joined the movement after the war. Otto Bauer had added to his pre-war writings a whole library of most important studies, and Max Adler had continued his interpretation of the riddle of society in some other books. In post-war England, where the continuity of Socialist tradition was not disrupted as it was in

\* It is symptomatic that *Der Sozialistische Kampf* (a bi-monthly of the Austrian Socialist refugees, published in Paris), which after Otto Bauer's death was edited by a joint editorial board of post-war Socialists, devoted to the event of Karl Kautsky's death, in 1938, merely a few lines in a corner of the paper, because to its editors that great figure in the history of Socialist thought had no greater significance. They treated the twentieth anniversary of Victor Adler's death in the same amazing way. For these post-war Socialists the heritage of Karl Kautsky and Victor Adler has dissolved to dust.

Austria, Socialist literature blossomed anew. I know no finer Socialist historical analysis (except Otto Bauer's historical works) than R. H. Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, and no finer Socialist analysis of the structure of capitalist society than Cole's *Condition of Britain*. The volumes of Socialist analysis and critique by the Webbs, Hobson, Leonard Woolf, H. N. Brailsford, were followed by a legion of, partly, very important volumes by Barnes, Laski, Cole, Macmurray, Strachey and many others. As far as I know, no fewer than four biographies of Karl Marx and a standard biography of Bakunin appeared in post-war England. But I know of no book, or even of any essay, written by others than pre-war Socialists in Austria which enriched or even stimulates Socialist thought. They passed through an ocean of history, seething in its depths; they had experienced the earthquake of the human race in a world war; they had witnessed the collapse of four empires, the triumph of Bolshevism and the rise of Fascism. But these tremendous events engendered no creative or even analytical thought.

The answer to this enigma is, of course, extremely difficult. Although it is true that, however great the number of intellectuals, but few are creative, the entire absence of any noteworthy intellectual work of post-war Socialists during the most dramatic decades in human history cannot be due to mere coincidence; there must be some deeper causes.

One of the causes might be the devastating dislocation brought about by the sudden collapse of a vast empire. Austria became a small country, not merely geographically, but also intellectually; the horizon of her problems had shrunk too. Her intellectual life was no longer fed by spiritual world streams. The permanence of her economic distress also diverted attention from wider to narrower problems. It should be noted that the intellectual decay of Austria which set in after the war was by no means confined merely to Socialist thought; the famous school of social science of the Vienna University (represented, for example, by Menger, Böhm-Bawerk and Carl Grünberg) also decayed.

The other cause of the decay might have been the rapid growth of the Socialist movement. The number of its members had increased tenfold during the post-war years; so had the domains of its activity. The movement was now able to satisfy political, journalistic and administrative aspirations. It is natural enough that every Socialist—from whatever walk of life—desired to work practically in the movement and to contribute directly to the common cause. To the intellectuals before the war, when the movement was comparatively small, a wide margin of leisure for study and contemplation was always left; so they were able to

assimilate the tradition of Socialist thought. The needs of the gigantic movement after the war were, however, so pressing that little leisure remained to the intellectual who served its machinery. So he was scarcely able to follow the bewildering speed of social and spiritual changes.

The sudden influx of tens of thousands of men and women into the Socialist movement had still other implications.

Up to the beginning of the war, the movement had grown steadily and organically. It was mainly a movement of the industrial workers, with a sprinkling of shop assistants (the number of middle-class people and intellectuals was insignificant). Almost everyone who then joined the Party did it only after his reason and emotions had accepted the Socialist "creed". There were few among them who expected any advantages for themselves from the Party. Most of them had been attracted to it by the universal idea of Socialism. When they became Socialists, they felt that they had entered a community which was striving for all humanity. They laboured assiduously to educate themselves and to absorb the Socialist idea.

After Friedrich Adler's speech before the court, in the second half of the war, the movement grew considerably. Workers and intellectuals alike, stirred by Adler's powerful appeal to the nobler human and social sentiments, flocked into the Party by the thousands. They, too, were guided by pure and unselfish motives. To them the Party was the force to end the barbarism of war and the last refuge of humanitarianism and peace amid the bloody welter in which mankind was plunged.

Then came, almost over-night, the collapse of the Hapsburg Empire; together with it all the traditional authorities collapsed. The great multitude of the less politically minded people were bewildered. Everything in which they had believed hitherto by habit and custom had vanished. They felt forlorn and helpless, isolated atoms in a world full of unknown horrors. There was only one cohesive moral force left: the Social Democratic Party.

The break-up of the State further wrecked the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of families. They saw themselves face to face with the grim prospect of deprivation. In the anxiety which this disaster caused, the Party was to these distressed people the only well of hope in a thorny wilderness. They fled to it in despair and greatly swelled the stream of the movement.

That new influx was composed not only of industrial workers, but also of the "small men", of artisans, business-men and even small entrepreneurs, of shop assistants, clerks, policemen, lawyers and doctors—in short, of that layer of society which is commonly called the middle class.

The motives of many of them in joining the Party were not quite idealistic. They expected something in return. They expected, above all, immediate help in their misery.

The Party was in control of Vienna's administration and its big enterprises (which were the largest in the country). They included transport, electric power, gas production, a big insurance company and banking house, apart from many hospitals, schools and welfare institutions; they employed nearly 60,000 persons. The Viennese municipality also built dwellings at the rate of 7000 a year, and allocated big commissions for public works. The Party was also in control of the whole network of the workers' insurance institutions and the labour exchanges, employing thousands of clerks and doctors. In combination with its power as the governing body of Vienna (and some other cities and towns) the Party was thus a source of livelihood for scores of thousands of people.

Many of the newcomers to the Party had joined it because they hoped it would help them to a flat in one of the newly erected municipal housing blocks, or to a job in one of the municipal enterprises, or to a loan at low interest for their small business, or to a works contract, or to an engagement as a doctor, teacher, or lawyer.

The infiltration of the Party by these social elements after the war perceptibly influenced its spiritual structure.

There were tens of thousands of workers now members of the Party who, before the war, thought it not worth while to join even a trade union. It was the floodtide of the revolution which had swept them into the movement. Without ideological background and political experience, they expected from the Party the performance of miracles which would soon relieve them from poverty, insecurity and insignificance. Many of them, destitute and embittered by long unemployment, were naturally susceptible to the most extreme slogans, and though they never joined either the Communists or Fascists, they carried with them a certain grudge against the more fortunate members of the working class and the leadership of the Party. So it was not too surprising that they abandoned the Party in the hour of its defeat.

And then there was a working-class youth which had grown up under the devastating economic and moral conditions during the war and its aftermath. They were underfed; their environment was most unhealthy. The father was in the forces and the mother in a war factory; the schools were inadequate, for many teachers had been called up. They lived amid the corrupt atmosphere of black marketing, war profiteering and, after the war, inflation speculation, with which Vienna in particular was ridden. Immense fortunes were amassed in no time and spent as quickly as they were acquired. The contrast between the

abysmal distress of the many and the brazen luxury of the few was perhaps nowhere in Western Europe so provocative as here. The war had further brutalised everyone in some way; the youth remained not unaffected by that general deterioration of manners and feeling.

In the best of this generation the material and moral misery evoked a fierce revolt; they became enthusiastic Socialists. Deeply impressed by the Bolshevik revolution and its methods, their Socialism was often highly romantic and their radicalism essentially Utopian. The language of the movement became coarser, and the appeal to force more frequent than before.

Still more critical was the infiltration of the Party by those who had joined it from other than an inner urge. Before the war they had to some extent fraternised with the anti-Semitic movement of the "small men" which the arch demagogue Karl Lueger (Hitler's admired predecessor) had organised; partly, they had been without any political affiliations and aspirations. Although many of them had entered the Party from interested motives, it cannot be said that they remained entirely unimpressed by the ideological and ethical atmosphere with which it was surrounded. As the bulk of the movement was healthy and most devout, so this social strata would have been absorbed by it and would have been permeated by its ideas in the course of a few decades. It could be observed that while the parents of this section of the Party membership were rather lukewarm and perhaps unreliable, their children grew up as ardent Socialists.

The influx of the lower middle class into the Socialist movement was in itself not inconsistent with its principles and aims, because the lower middle class stands economically and socially nearer to the working class than to the upper middle class; nor need there necessarily be an irreconcilable antagonism between the economic interests of these two classes.

But the change of mind and sentiment of a big layer of society can be effected only by a lengthy process. This educational work was, however, frustrated by the inroad of an economic disaster in the 'thirties,\* which hurt the lower middle class most. They were the first to desert the principles to which they had subscribed. When Hitler entered Vienna, they lined the streets in their hundreds of thousands and cheered him frantically. And in none of the German cities and towns was the outburst of anti-Semitism as beastly, as genuine and as vulgar as it was in Vienna after Hitler had seized it.

\* Austria's exports fell in value from 2100 million Schilling (1 Schilling = 9d.) in 1927 to 817 million Schilling in 1933. The number of unemployed rose from 192,000 in 1929 to 378,000 in 1932.

x (Millennium)

# THE END OF THE INTERNATIONAL

"Sleep, shall we sleep after all? for the world is not sweet in the end;  
For the old faiths loosen and fall, and the new years ruin and rend."  
—Swinburne, *Hymn of Proserpine*.

THE COURT could not uphold, on legal grounds, the charge of high treason against me; so after five months it handed me back to the police. The police, however, instead of releasing me, "sentenced" me to another eight months in a concentration camp just for being "a fanatical Social Democrat". At the end of January 1935, however, they set me free on condition that I left the country.

The year which I had spent in prison cells and in the camp was not all waste. I made friends with some fine fellows whom I had previously known only slightly, and I attempted to fill as many of the gaps in my knowledge of history and literature as I could. When I was notified that I was free, my feelings were strangely mixed. I had to leave in captivity friends, victims of Fascism like myself, with whom I had shared everything in a true brotherly community. And I had to think of so many of my comrades in Germany who had to suffer untold cruelties at the hands of their fiendish foes.

I had experienced, on the whole, neither ill-treatment nor privation—for Austrian Fascism was too precarious a régime to risk arousing strong public indignation in the Western countries by brutality. But I had been a prisoner all the same, deprived of the one thing without which life withers: freedom.

It was, thus, a great moment for me when the train which was to take me from Austria started to move. "To-morrow morning I shall be free," I kept saying to myself. "In fourteen hours I shall be really free."

I stood at the corridor window of the train, looking out into the wintry night. The snow-covered mountains and slopes in the light of a full moon glided slowly by. How peacefully the silent world lay under the starlit sky! Well, perhaps I shall enjoy it once more. The day after to-morrow I shall see my wife and my children. I looked at my watch. "Another nine hours, and we shall have crossed the frontier," I calculated.

I will try to start a new life, I thought. What I had built

up in so many years of work was, of course, in ruins. But why should I not begin anew? I was only forty-four. Perhaps life might regain something of its purpose.

What, however, would have to be its purpose now? Clearly to stop the rot with which Fascism threatened to contaminate the whole of civilisation. Perhaps, I thought, I might contribute a little to making Labour in Western Europe understand that the fight against Fascism is not the business of the German, Austrian and Italian workers alone. Perhaps they would one day recognise that, if they did not proceed from oral protests to direct action against Hitler, their countries, too, would be engulfed by the maelstrom of the disaster.

Yet what did direct action against Hitler mean?

In 1920, Edo Fimmen, then General Secretary of the International Federation of Trade Unions, came to Vienna and suggested breaking Horthy's newly established power by an international boycott of Horthy Hungary. The workers all over the world should refuse to load, the railwaymen and the sailors should refuse to carry goods for Hungary; at the same time, the Labour Parties in all democratic countries should launch a mighty crusade against Horthy; they should inflame opinion, and should bring pressure to bear upon the governments to sever their relations with that bloodstained tyranny.

Fimmen's suggestion was accepted by the workers' organisation in Central Europe, in particular by the Austrian workers who lived nearest to Hungary. On the appointed day, all traffic from Austria to Hungary stopped.

But only Hungary's western borders were sealed. For while the Austrian workers kept their pledge, the Czech and Polish workers continued to load, and to carry coal, raw material and manufactured goods for Horthy Hungary. The Austrian workers, at great sacrifice—for it increased the number of unemployed—held out for three weeks; left alone in their fight, they had to give it up. The first attempt at direct action by the working classes on an international scale had failed ingloriously.

Had international Labour learned the lesson since? If, in Hungary, international Labour had made a great, persistent effort, it could perhaps have crushed weak Hungarian Fascism. If international Labour had let the world know by deeds that it would nowhere tolerate the suppression of freedom, perhaps nowhere would Fascism have dared to raise its head. But the English and the French, the Czech and the Polish workers thought then that freedom in Hungary was not their concern. So the deadly rot of Fascism spread from Hungary to Italy and Poland, from there to Germany and from Germany to Austria.

Did western Labour still believe that it would stop there? If Labour acted now, I felt, perhaps the situation could be retrieved. I knew that we could still rescue the living from the clutch of death. I felt certain that if the workers of the free countries would combine all their strength with the oppressed workers in Fascist countries in a resolute struggle, a new freedom all over the world would emerge. While so reflecting I saw a sparkling meteor, after filling half of the heavens, vanish suddenly into darkness. Oh, I knew that

“All things are ready,  
If our minds be so.”

I looked again at my watch. “In about half an hour we shall be in Innsbruck,” I murmured to myself. “Then we have only another four hours to go.”

At long last I had crossed the Austrian frontiers. There was no incident. The police had not, as I had perhaps foolishly feared, changed their mind. Now I was really free. For the first time I experienced fully the great feeling of personal security, a feeling which we learn to know only when it is wanting. And when, a few hours later, the train drove into Zürich station and Friedrich Adler received me on the platform with a warm handshake, I was inclined to think that life was glorious.

Yet behind the “new life” I had to start, a peril loomed which I dreaded most. It was the peril of succumbing to the common mental plight of refugees. It is very rarely that political refugees are able to escape it. The English refugees from James II’s persecutions who assembled in The Hague, and the French refugees of the Revolution who plotted in Coblenz, developed precisely the same unhealthy psychology as the Russian refugees from Czarist oppression (so vividly described by Alexander Herzen) and the German refugees from Bismarck’s persecution (so mercilessly derided by Marx and Engels). Even Cicero’s letters from his very comfortable Greek asylum betray his mental sufferings, though he proudly held that exile is after all not so terrible to those “who look upon the globe but as one city”. I have seen how desperately my Hungarian friends, driven from their country, struggled against that curse. Sigmund Kunfi, former leader of the Hungarian Socialist Party, though a man of exceptional ability and moral strength, and in the prime of his life, broke down after ten years. Although he found in the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, of which he became its splendid foreign editor, a wide field of activity, he was unable to overcome his depression; he committed suicide. And eleven years later so did Zoltan Ronay, one of the most sensitive and learned Socialists Hungary had pro-



duced. The only means of escaping from the tormenting visitations of depression was, I thought, hard work in an attempt to assimilate entirely the new spiritual surroundings in which one had to live.

I was not yet quite clear where I could, and should, settle down. My family had found an asylum at the home of my brother, who, a refugee from Nazi oppression, had settled in Brussels. But I felt myself nearer to English civilisation and the British Labour movement than to the Belgian or French, and I also believed that, as I could speak neither English nor French, I should be able to acquire the Germanic English language sooner than the French.

For a while some interesting and urgent jobs had to be attended to. In 1932 my old friend Berl Locker, an Executive member of the Palestine Labour Party, had invited me, on behalf of his organisation, to visit Palestine. I had gladly accepted the invitation, but I had to postpone the visit time and time again because of the acuteness of the political situation in Germany and at home. A few days after I arrived in Brussels I received a letter from Siegfried Taub, Secretary of the German Social Democratic Party of Czechoslovakia, asking me to come to Prague for a few weeks and help him in the campaign for the forthcoming general election. Soon after I had returned to Brussels from Czechoslovakia and Palestine I was invited by Jacob Reiss, on behalf of the Warsaw Socialist Zionist organisation, to make a lecture tour throughout Poland. A little later I was invited by the Dutch Socialist Zionists and the Amsterdam Social Democratic organisation to come to Holland for a number of lectures. So almost the whole of the first year of my life as a refugee was occupied with travels, lectures, and journalistic work on my impressions of the countries I had seen.

There was one characteristic common to every Labour movement I studied: the lack of intrinsic awareness of the real nature of the catastrophe of the German and Austrian Labour movements. There was certainly nowhere a lack of sincere compassion for the suffering comrades in the Fascist countries. For example, when the news about Dollfuss' *coup d'état* reached Palestine, the Jewish workers—still small in number—queued before the Party office to contribute a day's wage, and within less than a week £5000 was collected for the relatives of Dollfuss' victims. Such collections were carried out in almost every country with a free Labour movement. More than 1000 members of the *Republikanischer Schutzbund* who had retreated into Czechoslovakia after the fight found generous hospitality from the Czech and Sudeten-German Socialists for months and even years. And I

myself knew from the warm reception I received everywhere I went how deeply the international Socialist community was shocked by Austria's plight and how eager it was to help.

Yet it appeared that nowhere did Labour grasp how closely the destinies of Socialism in the various countries are connected. They apparently did not realise that freedom, like peace, is indivisible under modern conditions. They seemed unable to imagine that what had happened to other countries could just as well happen to their own. They were engrossed by their own tasks, and at the bottom of their hearts did not want to be distracted from their work by anticipating dangers, still clouded in a remote future. Perhaps lack of imagination is an infirmity man needs as a means of maintaining composure in this world bristling with perils.

A few weeks before Dollfuss launched his assault on the Austrian Labour movement I had a revealing talk with Ludwig Czech, leader of the German Social Democrats in Czechoslovakia and a member of the Government. Otto Bauer had sent me to him to inquire whether, and if so in what way, the Czech Government was willing to assist Austria's democracy if Dollfuss should proceed to an open attack on it: whether the Czech Government would be prepared to intervene, openly or tacitly; whether it would permit the forming of a voluntary semi-military force composed of Czechoslovak Socialists and would let them march into Austria; whether it would, at least, bring diplomatic pressure to bear upon Dollfuss without delay to ward off the impending menace.

Ludwig Czech, whom I had known for almost twenty years, listened most attentively and made his notes. He understood, of course, as well as every one of us in Vienna, that should Dollfuss break the Austrian Labour Movement the dam against the Nazi flood would break, too, and sooner or later Austria would become a province of Hitler Germany. But although he realised that danger, he was most reluctant to visualise its consequences. That Czechoslovakia's independence could be imperilled, and would even become untenable, should Hitler occupy Austria, appeared to him such a fantastic proposition that he hesitated to face it. Yet he promised to talk seriously about it with Mr. Eduard Benes, then Foreign Minister.

The answer which I received from him next morning was exactly what I had expected. From the notes Ludwig Czech had made from his talk with Mr. Benes I observed that they had indeed thoroughly discussed my presentation point by point. The result, in brief, was that the Czech Government would connive—as it had done hitherto—at the buying of arms in

Czechoslovakia for the *Republikanischer Schutzbund*; it would further inform the Czech ambassadors in London and Paris about the imminence of the Fascist threat to Austria and would instruct them to communicate this information to the British and French Governments; it could not, however, consider any direct intervention in Austria, or even the exercise of diplomatic pressure upon her Government, nor could it permit the indirect intervention of volunteers of Czech nationality by crossing the frontiers. "For you must understand, dear friend," Ludwig Czech said in concluding the conversation, "democracy or Fascism in Austria is, from the point of view of a foreign government, an internal affair of that country."

I knew that Ludwig Czech would not say such a thing lightly. He had spent half of his life's work in the Austrian movement; he loved it as his own, and was by personal ties still very closely connected with it. Yet he could not see how he could help us. And as for Czechoslovakia, she was protected, he pointed out, by the Franco-Czechoslovakian alliance, in itself strong enough to repel any act of aggression, and, in addition, by the League of Nations—really how could it be imagined that Hitler Germany, unarmed as she was, should dare to challenge the world!

This appeared to be the prevailing opinion, I found, above all in England. About a fortnight before Hitler marched into Austria I went, alarmed by the news I had received from my country, to Mr. William Gillies, then Secretary of the British Labour Party's Foreign Department, to inform him that Hitler had concentrated a strong force in Bavaria, apparently preparing to occupy Austria. To every observer of Austria's affairs it was clear since Schuschnigg's visit to Hitler at Berchtesgaden that he would do it. The troop concentration indicated that he was resolved to do it within the next few days. I implored Mr. Gillies to suggest to the Labour Party some "steps" in an effort to stave off that menace.

"What do you mean by taking steps?" Mr. Gillies asked me inquiringly. "Do you seriously mean that Britain should go to war to save Austria?"

I replied that the alternative to doing nothing need not necessarily be war. I could imagine, I said, that if British public opinion were strongly aroused, and if the British Government let Hitler know now, before the event, that it would be shocked by such an act of aggression and would gravely consider counter-measures, that need not mean war, and yet might intimidate Hitler.

"That's nonsense," Mr. Gillies interrupted. "If Britain

threatens counter-measures she must also be prepared to go to war. And what an idea to go to war for Austria!" he exclaimed.

Mr. Gillies was also not impressed by the argument that if Hitler occupied Austria he would certainly reduce Czechoslovakia to vassalage, encircled by the German power as she would become, and that, in possession of Vienna, the gateway from Western to Eastern Europe, Hitler would step by step force Hungary, Rumania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria into his orbit.

"I'm certain," I said, "that far more than Austria alone is at stake."

Mr. Gillies, however, remained unconvinced and unmoved, and refused to do anything. To him my forecast (which I had repeatedly pronounced in the *Tribune*, where I worked on its foreign section) appeared utterly incredible. While I spoke he often murmured, "Nonsense! nonsense!" Only when I turned up at his office again two or three days before Hitler actually moved his troops into Austria, did Mr. Gillies, at last aware of the menace, in my presence ring up Mr. Arthur Henderson in the House of Commons and discuss with him briefly the feasibility of putting a question on Austria to the Prime Minister. Yet there was still nothing in his words and voice indicating the magnitude of the emergency.

I knew how deeply Mr. Gillies was shocked when Austria fell a few days afterwards. His previous reluctance to face the hard fact of the impending threat perhaps reflected merely the feeling of helplessness which apparently paralysed all the Labour parties of the world.

International Labour was bewildered by the triumphal march of Fascism. Everywhere it felt menaced by extinction, and its countries by war and conquest. British Toryism had deserted the cause of collective security in the case of Mussolini's aggression on Abyssinia; it had tolerated Mussolini's and Hitler's intervention in Spain; still earlier it had tolerated Hitler's breach of the Locarno Treaty, Hitler's rearmament, Hitler's fortification of the Rhineland; in the end, Hitler's rape of Austria. It even rewarded Hitler with the conclusion of a naval agreement. British Labour, however, was unable to turn the tide; it was a strong moral, but actually a weak political, force. When not even British Labour was capable of stemming the drive of the Fascist Powers, what could be expected from the Labour parties of the smaller countries? The failure to repel Mussolini's aggression had discredited the League of Nations beyond repair as an instrument for the maintenance of peace. Who would protect the smaller countries if one day the Fascist war machine turned against them?

Fear dissolved all ties of international solidarity. The attitude of the individual members of the International was determined by the wild anxiety to save at least their own country from the deluge of a Fascist war. The meetings of the Executive of the Labour and Socialist International (which I attended in the critical years from August 1938 until the outbreak of the war) displayed a true tragedy of Socialism. The acuter the international crisis grew, the more difficult it became to rally international Labour behind a common policy. The nearer the monster of war approached the European scene, the more reluctant were the delegates of the smaller countries to commit themselves to anything which might appear to Hitler as a pretext for an attack. If war was inevitable, then, many thought, let my country escape from the disaster.

British Labour had resolutely proclaimed the need for armed resistance against Hitler's further designs of conquest; Léon Blum, supported by only half of the French Socialist Party, pleaded passionately for the same policy in his country and in the International. Everyone on the Executive was aware that the International was faced with its crucial test; that if it failed now, in the supreme crisis of humanity, it would forfeit its moral mandate. And everyone knew, too, that should Fascism triumph in the forthcoming contest, no Labour movement in any European country would survive.

Yet the immediate urge of self-preservation was stronger than the Socialist appeal to international solidarity. It was characteristic to observe in the Executive the same division of attitude between pre-war and post-war Socialists as I had observed in the Party of my country. The men of the "old Guard" in the International, such as de Brouckère, Léon Blum, Emile Vandervelde, Hilferding, Nenni, Albarda, Dan, Otto Bauer and Friedrich Adler, stood unswervingly for the cause of international solidarity. The younger generation was, however, inclined to a more "realistic" point of view.

Events, however, had shown that opportunism is bound to fail in the great decisions of mankind. The "realists" did not conceive that true self-preservation imperatively demanded the strictest application of the principles of international solidarity. Never before had history vindicated the idea of internationalism with such a terrific power as during that crisis. With the blood of millions it had inscribed the lesson that national egotism is the most fatal fallacy of the human mind. No country escaped the cataclysm; and all suffered more because some, wishing to escape, deserted their brothers.

Because the presence of the International was a permanent

reminder of the duty of international solidarity, it became intensely disliked in some Labour quarters. Delegates of some countries (including, curiously enough, the British delegation, of which Mr. Gillies was the spokesman) demanded insistently that the International should be divested of any political or moral function and reduced to a mere clearing house for the exchange of information. Friedrich Adler, for sixteen years its General Secretary, answered this demand with his resignation a few weeks before the outbreak of the war.\* The crisis of humanity was preluded by a crisis of the Socialist International.

### CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

## PALESTINE INTERLUDE

"Mercy I had for Man; and therefore I  
Must meet no mercy; but hang crucified  
In witness of God's cruelty and pride."  
—Aeschylus, *Prometheus*.

BEFORE I witnessed the depressing process of the disintegration of the International, I experienced the most impressive display of a national renaissance. Soon after leaving Austria, I went on a visit to Palestine.

The Jewish Question had never disturbed my Jewish conscience much. I certainly felt Jewishness, and I felt that this added something of an imponderable feature to my individuality which differentiated me slightly from my Gentile comrades. I also felt a sense of belonging to the Jewish community all over the world.

I ceased religious practice at the age of thirteen; the religious tradition of Hebraism, whether orthodox or reformed, never appealed to me. In the natural process of the growing mind I assimilated the cultural inheritance of the German society with which I was surrounded. Yet I was never a conscientious "assimilationist". I never wished to stifle my Jewish feeling, nor was it ever to me a source of discomfort. Sometimes, when I thought of one or other of the glowing stars in the Jewish sky—Spinoza or Heine, Ricardo or Einstein, Mendelssohn or Mahler—I felt it was not such a misfortune to belong to a people which had produced such men.

\* Friedrich Adler's statement on his resignation was published in the *International Socialist Forum* (the monthly supplement of *The Left News*) in March 1943.

It also seemed no mere accident that such a conspicuously large number of Jews had served the cause of humanity and international Socialism (though the proportion of conservative and even reactionary Jews is far bigger).

There are some passages in the Bible which have always moved me deeply, whenever I read them, those on mercy towards, and compassion for, the disinherited and "bondmen".

Aristotle, in the first book of his *Politics*, expressed the prevailing attitude of his time when he said that "The slave is a tool with life in it, the tool is a lifeless slave"; and so did Cato when he placed the slave in the same category as the ox.\* In the ancient Roman economy "Slaves and cattle were placed on the same level," recorded Mommsen, ". . . and no attempt was ever made to attach the slaves to the estate or to their master by any bond of human sympathy. The letter of the law in all its naked hideousness regulated the relation."†

However, according to the Hebrew teaching the slave is God's creature, like his master—that is, a human being with a divine soul, and therefore entitled to be treated as a human being. "Did not He that made me in the womb make him?" Job exclaimed, and insisted that if the slave was wronged by his master, the law for his protection is to be upheld. "If I did despise the cause of my manservant or maidservant, when they contended with me: what then shall I do when God riseth up? and when He visiteth me, what shall I answer Him?" (Job xxxi. 13-15). The Hebrew law says: "Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be one of thy brethren, or of the strangers that are in thy land within thy gates; in his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is

\* It should be noted that Cato's attitude towards the slave prevailed through the Christian ages. Even one thousand eight hundred and sixty-five years after Cato's death Samuel Sewall, the Magistrate of the Puritan Massachusetts Colony, made this significant entry in his diary: "I essay'd June 22 (1716) to prevent Indians and Negros being Rated with Horses and Hogs; but did not prevail".—Samuel Sewall's *Diary*, vol. III, p. 87; quoted by V. L. Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*, vol. I, p. 95. And another 145 years later, in 1861, when the South States seceded from the North States and set up a new Confederation, Alexander Stephens, the Vice President of the "Confederate States of America", declared: "The new constitution makes an end, once and for all, of the disturbing problems that have arisen out of our institution, slavery. . . . The prevailing ideas entertained by Jefferson . . . were that the enslavement of the Africans was in violation of the law of nature. . . . Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea. Its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery—subordination to the superior race—is his natural and normal condition. . . . It is, indeed, in conformity with the ordinance of the Creator."—Quoted by Arthur Bryant, *The American Ideal*, p. 74.

† Theodor Mommsen, *The History of Rome*, vol. II, pp. 346-7.

poor, and setteth his heart upon it; lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee" (Deut. xxiv. 14-15). And so the law of the sabbath—surely the first monumental Act of social legislation in the history of all mankind—is designed not only for the freemen, but also "for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourns with thee". The law further decrees that the "hired servant", or slave, who had served for six years, "shall go out free from thee". Moreover, the law says that "when thou lettest him go free from thee thou shalt not let him go empty: thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy threshing floor, and out of thy winepress". This is commanded for two reasons. First, "It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou lettest him go free from thee; for the double of the hire of an hireling hath he served thee six years"; secondly, "And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to-day" (Deut. xv. 13-16).

This tradition of mercy, social justice and social responsibility still lives, I think, in the Socialist tradition. It might even be possible to trace back the essential economic idea of Socialism to the Hebrew conception of property, based on the common brotherhood of man. For according to the Hebrew conception the only owner of property is God\* (or, as we would say to-day, human society); the individual does not own property, but has only the usufruct of it. The primitive economy of the ancient Jews could of course not visualise common property or, as we would say to-day, its common usufruct. But in the institution of the "jubilee year"—that is, the "fiftieth years"—it provided for the redistribution of property and the restoration of economic equality: "Ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family" (Lev. xxv. 12).

It is the Hebrew conception of property, derived from the creed of the brotherhood of man, which had penetrated early Christianity, and later the teachings of the Schoolmen, and which in the end was developed in the Socialist doctrine. "To the Fathers of the Church not the institution of private property, but the institution of Communism, was according to the law of nature. Just as the air and the light of the sun cannot be private property, so everything in the world that is of use for all should be possessed by all and should not be divided."†

\* "The land shall not be sold forever, for 'the land is Mine', saith Jehovah." —Lev. xxv. 23.

† Lujo Brentano, *Der wirtschaftende Mensch in der Gesellschaft*, p. 37-8. For a brief survey see M. Beer, *A History of British Socialism*, vol. I, chapter 1.



The Fathers and the Schoolmen—from Clemens of Alexandria, Tertullian, Basilus, Hyronimus to Gratian and Thomas Aquinas—regarded private property as an evil (though unavoidable) and proclaimed that it had to serve common usufruct.\* Professor R. H. Tawney, in his penetrating analysis of the economic theory of the Schoolmen, arrives at the conclusion that “the true descendant of the doctrines of Aquinas is the labour theory of value. The last of the Schoolmen was Karl Marx.”† And in another study he says: “In so far as Christianity is taken seriously, it destroys alike the arbitrary power of the few and the slavery of the many. . . . By affirming that all men are the children of God, it insists that the rights of men are equal. By affirming that men are men and nothing more, it is a warning that those rights are conditional and derivative—a commission of service, not of property.”‡

Thus it might be asserted that the Hebrew tradition, alive in the ancient and medieval idea of Christianity, influenced the modern idea of Socialism. I am certain that Otto Bauer had the Jewish tradition, as expressed in the social teachings of the Bible, in mind when he said that in Karl Marx the history of the Jewish nation, as well as of the German, French and English, was embodied.§

It might, then, be that the powerful appeal to social justice which reverberates through the Scriptures was the strong moral force which had added to the Roll of Honour in the history of Socialism the long list of illustrious Jewish names.

Another impetus, perhaps, was the martyrdom of the Jewish people from the time when they had been “bondmen in the land of Egypt” up to our time. Treated as outcasts through the

\* “All things are common and not for the rich to appropriate an undue share. That expression therefore, ‘I possess and possess it in abundance, why should I not enjoy?’, is suitable neither to man nor society. . . . God has given to us the liberty of use, but only so far as necessary, and He has determined that the use should be common.”—Clement of Alexandria, *Pead.* II. 13, quoted by M. Beer, *ibid.*, p. 7.

† R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 36.

‡ R. H. Tawney, *The Acquisitive Society*, p. 234. The perception of the equality of men derived from the common origin of men is most graphically expressed by the leader of the English peasants’ revolt of 1381, John Ball: “My good people,—Things cannot go well in England, nor ever will, until all goods are held in common, and until there will be neither serfs nor gentlemen, and we shall all be equal. For what reason have they, whom we call lords, got the best of us? How did they deserve it? Why do they keep us in bondage? If we all descended from one father and one mother, Adam and Eve, how can they assert or prove that they are more masters than ourselves?” John Ball died on the gallows at St. Albans.—Froissart, *Collection des Chroniques*, VIII, c. 106. Quoted by M. Beer, *ibid.*, p. 28.

§ Otto Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*, 2nd ed., p. 118.

centuries, it was natural that the best among them became champions of the equality of man. I felt very much like them, and I did not feel inferior in the ranks of men and women which included Marx, Lassalle and Rosa Luxemburg, Treves, Turatti, Martov, Léon Blum and, above all—because they were nearest to my heart—Victor Adler, Friedrich Adler and Otto Bauer.

This Jewish feeling was also reinforced by something like loyalty towards my parents. I respected my father and loved my mother, who were both faithful to their creed and people. They had grown up in a society which had become alien to me. When I met that society during the last war, in Cracow and other Polish towns, my first impression was that I did not belong to it. There the Jews lived as a distinct nation, distinguished by language, manners, habits, clothes and, above all, by tradition and outlook, from all other nations, and also from myself. I could not speak the language they spoke, their ways of thinking and reacting were entirely different from mine. Yet there was something which attracted me. When I read Sholem Asch's novel *The Mother*, I discerned in Asch's heroine the traits of my mother and my wife's mother.

But while I felt my Jewishness rather strongly, I did not speculate much about the "Jewish Question". Since I was converted to Socialism, I was wont to "look upon the globe as but one city", and I saw Socialism as the idea of a society, "equal, unclassed, tribeless and nationless". I never discussed the desirability of preserving the individuality of the Jewish nation, because I believed that with the spread of the capitalist economy, which, as Karl Marx had expressed it, "transforms the Christians into Jews"—that is, which makes every member of society an instrument of the capitalist fabric—and with the spread of democracy and Socialism—which preach the equality of men—the Jewish people, while retaining something of their identity, would be absorbed by the civilisation of the people among whom they lived.

This assumption was derived from my own experience. While I had retained something of my Jewish identity, I had been, without any intention on my part, almost automatically absorbed by Western civilisation; still more intensely have my children been moulded in this cultural melting pot of Europe. My outlook was further influenced by Karl Marx's brilliant essay, *Zur Judenfrage*, and the twenty-sixth chapter of Otto Bauer's *Nationalitätenfrage*.

A century had passed since Karl Marx wrote his essay, and one generation since Otto Bauer wrote his book. Although during this period very many "Christians have become Jews"—that

is, functionaries of the money economy—and although many “Jews have become Christians”—that is, industrial workers and artisans—the Jewish question has lost nothing of its tragic acuteness. Neither the spread of the capitalist economy nor the spread of democracy has mitigated the curse with which the Jews are haunted. Hardly had the Polish people been liberated, after the last Great War, than they started the suppression of their Jewish compatriots. Long before Hitler had assumed power, anti-Semitic sentiments gained momentum not only in Germany, but also, for example, in France, in the very country which had been the champion of the equality of the Jews. And it might be that G. K. Chesterton vented something of the feelings of a section of the English population when he, in face of Hitler’s persecution of the Jews, said: “It is only just to Hitler to say they (the Jews) have been too powerful in Germany. . . . Again, it is but just to Hitlerism to say that the Jews did infect Germany with a good many things less harmless than the lyrics of Heine or the melodies of Mendelssohn. It is true that many Jews toiled at that obscure conspiracy against Christendom, which some of them can never abandon; and sometimes it was marked not by obscurity but obscenity. It is true that they were financiers, or in other words usurers; it is true that they fattened on the worst form of Capitalism; and it is inevitable that, on losing these advantages of Capitalism, they naturally took refuge in its other form, which is Communism.”\*

It is entirely irrelevant that G. K. Chesterton’s observation is rather a travesty of history, less delightful than his romantic novels. What matters is that apparently many people might feel like Chesterton, and this demonstrates the undiminished urgency of the Jewish question—to-day just as a century ago.

I am still inclined to think that the structure and spirit of a Socialist society preclude the emergence of anti-Semitism. I believe that in fact Socialism is the only solution of the Jewish problem, in the sense of the emancipation of the Jewish people (as every oppressed people) from any moral or social discrimination or disability.

But clearly the Jews cannot afford to wait until Socialism has become a reality.

How, then, can they escape their doom?

It would, in the first place, be as undignified as it is futile to try to escape extermination by national self-extermination. Sociology has for half a century discussed the question whether or not the Jewish people are to be regarded as a distinct nation (like, for example, the English, French or Czech). Whatever is

\* G. K. Chesterton, *The End of the Armistice*, 1940, p. 95.

the answer of social science to this query, the world at large has answered it in the affirmative: it treats the Jewish people as a distinct nation—that is, as a group which is somehow different from any other national group.

There exists a testimony worthy of being recorded, for it is provided by a great humanitarian and a true European. It is Romain Rolland's reflections on the Jews. He admires most sympathetically the intelligence and the human sense of the Jewish people. He calls them "the salt of the earth". He even says that "if we were so unfortunate as to have the Jews driven from Europe, we should be left so poor in intelligence and power for action that we should be in danger of utter bankruptcy. In France especially, in the present condition of French vitality, their expulsion would mean a more deadly drain on the blood of the nation than the expulsion of the Protestants in the seventeenth century." And yet, he distinguishes between the Jewish people and the French people, though he admits that the former are often more patriotic Frenchmen than the latter. "Not that I think their race inferior to ours:—(all these questions of the supremacy of races are idiotic and disgusting).—But we cannot admit that a foreign race, which has not yet been fused into our own, can possibly know better than we do what suits us."\*

I met the same mood in Austria. In the Austrian Social Democratic movement there was hardly any anti-Semitic feeling. Yet an air of distinction between Jews and Gentiles was always present; it was seldom an air of hostility; more often it was an air of admiration, because a number of Jewish Socialists had excelled in their services for the movement. However, the Gentile comrade, while accepting his Jewish comrade as equal in the Socialist community, felt that he was in some way different. Some Jewish comrades would discount such disquieting feelings by emphasising their indifference towards the Jews at large; some would alter their family names (or adopt a pen-name), so as to conceal their Jewish origin.

I always felt that such an attitude was a cowardly answer to the problem. In this crisis of the Jewish people, which had been a constant one long before Hitler unleashed the torments of hell upon the Jews, it seemed contemptible for a Jewish Socialist to disown the persecuted community to which he belonged by fate. I could not respect a German Socialist who attempted to conceal his national identity, because of the hatred and contempt of the Germans which Nazi Germany has aroused in the world. Just because Germany fell into disgrace and distress,

\* Romain Rolland, *John Christopher*, vol. III, p. 382.

he ought not to desert his comrades, but to stand with them in the common endeavour to redeem his people. And true as it is that a French-Jewish Socialist, like Léon Blum, belongs to the French Socialist movement, or an English-Jewish Socialist, like Harold Laski, belongs to the British Labour movement, so it seems true to me that the French or the English Jewish Socialist also belongs to the Jewish people, in particular to the Jewish Labour movement.

This dualism of national allegiance is as little a contradiction in itself as the dualism of a Socialist's allegiance to his own nation and to the Socialist International. Jean Jaurès was a great Frenchman, and a great Socialist internationalist too.

It was this sentiment which long ago determined my attitude to Zionism. I never believed (nor do I now believe) that Zionism could "solve" the Jewish problem. I understood the view of the Jewish *Bundists* (which I discussed many an evening with Victor Alter and Jacob Ehrlich in Warsaw), who maintained that the four or five million destitute Jews in Eastern Europe would have to remain in the countries of their birth and struggle side by side with the Polish and Rumanian workers for their liberation from oppression and poverty (since then the Nazis have slaughtered most of them). I know that Palestine is able to absorb only a fraction of the Jewish people, and that the bulk of them will have to live in the countries of their birth. Yet my warmest sympathy went to the gallant attempt at re-creating, from at least a section of the harassed national elements, a national community with a national economic structure and cultural superstructure, deeply permeated by Socialist ideas and emotions.

I arrived in Palestine in high spirits. Three months before, I was still a prisoner in Schuschnigg's hands. Now I had crossed the Mediterranean under a luminous sky in the golden light of a new spring. My memory was still haunted by the horror of the base murder of my country's Socialist movement. The day after my arrival in Haifa, when my friend Mendel Singer took me to a reception arranged by the Labour Federation, I felt at home. There I found the same brotherly atmosphere I had known in the heyday of Red Vienna: the same warm feeling of international solidarity, the same unflinching devotion to the cause, the same pride in their Socialist achievements.

Most surprising was the predominant type of the audience. There were about 700 young Jewish workers. Most of them looked just like young Austrian workers or peasants: slender, broad-shouldered, sunburnt, tough, slow-moving and reserved—in short, entirely different from the type of young Jewish townspeople of Eastern Europe.

But these lads had been born in Eastern Europe, in the slums of Warsaw, Bialystok, Kishenev, Czernovitz. A few years' work on the land had altered not only their habits, but even their physiognomy. They had changed with the change of environment and with their conditions of life.

I had seen some of the appalling slums from which they had emigrated. I had seen the children of the ghettos, growing up in unspeakable squalor and misery, and with so little hope. How bitterly had Victor Alter complained to me about the fact that the main activity of the Jewish Labour movement in Poland consisted merely in asserting their right to work. While the Polish Socialist Party and the Polish trade unions supported the Jewish workers' claim, the Polish workers did not care for the company of Jewish workers in the shop.

The number of industrial Polish-Jewish workers (confined to certain trades) was certainly considerable; there were also a few thousand Jewish agricultural workers. But infinitely more numerous were those who were excluded from industrial and agricultural work and who were forced into becoming pedlars.

These poverty-stricken Jewish quarters in the towns of Eastern Europe were still surrounded by the stifling atmosphere of medieval traditions. Although the Jewish Socialist Party in these territories (the *Bund*) had attracted many thousands of young Jewish intellectuals and workers, and not a few of them stood in the forefront of the revolutionary movements in Russia and Poland—again the number of those who succumbed to their environment and remained unaffected by the spiritual and social trends of our century was far bigger.

Such was the world from which the Jewish youth had emerged by migrating to Palestine. This migration worked a twofold miracle: it changed the men, and the men changed the country.

Before I went to Palestine I had read some records of Jewish achievements in the cultivation of the land. However, what I saw was beyond anything I had imagined. A stretch of desolated land which I passed on my way to Tel Aviv was like a symbol. "You see how Palestine looked before we came to this country," said Mendel Singer. "But soon you will see how it looks now." A few minutes later, from the window of the train I saw orange-groves stretching for miles and miles along the shores of the sea. That is how Palestine looks now. These young Jewish pioneers had transformed the wilderness of the Plain of Sharon into perhaps the loveliest garden of the world.

We arrived in Tel Aviv. Mendel Singer took me a short way outside the town to show me what the land on which the town

was built was like: I saw a range of dunes of golden sand, sprinkled with thorny bushes. From this sand had emerged healthy, modern dwellings for some 200,000 people, built from the bottom to the top by Jewish brains and Jewish hands. Jewish architects had designed the houses, Jewish brick-makers had produced the bricks, Jewish builders had erected the houses, Jewish carpenters had produced the furniture, Jewish electricians had installed the electrical fittings.

Then I visited the villages, the most delightful parts of Palestine. Some of them, like Degania, had a history of thirty years; some of them only of one or two years. There I saw lemon and orange groves, orchards, banana plantations, vineyards, cornfields and vegetable gardens, cowsheds and poultry farms. Everything that now grows and lives there had been planted and bred by these young Jewish people, many of whom not long before had composed the dregs of Eastern European society. They had first to drain swamps, or to remove stones from the desert, and had to sink wells, before they could start planting trees and tilling the soil.

The building of houses, the cultivation of the soil, the breeding of animals is not regarded as a particular achievement among the people of the earth. Every nation has its peasants and bricklayers, its tractor-drivers and its engineers—every nation, with the exception of the Jews. The Jewish nation is the only one in the world which has been divorced from the land, with the result that it could find work only in a limited number of trades in the towns. In Palestine a Jewish community is now in the making which includes every element of which a modern society is composed: from the tiller of the soil to the scholar at the Hebrew University.

But even more impressive than the creative work is the spirit which inspires it. The Jewish pioneers who entered Palestine after the last war were resolved to build a Socialist society. There should be no private property either in land or in industry. The land should be national property, the farms should be worked collectively, and the industrial sector should be run by workers' co-operatives. This vision of a Socialist Zion did not completely materialise. A big sector of Palestine's economic life has developed on a capitalist basis. But there is no country in the world, except Russia, which has developed such a Socialist community as Palestine.

Its finest achievement are the Socialist collectives, called *kvutzot* (the plural of *kvutza*). The *kvutza* is a most comprehensive Socialist and democratic community; indeed, it is a perfect brotherhood and sisterhood of young men and women. I have

seen about a dozen of them, small and big, some of long standing, some which had only recently come into being.

Every *kvutza* is started by a small group of men and women who have lived and worked together in a *kvutza* of older standing and who want to have one of their own. They get the land, and some means to live and implements to work with for the initial period (in the form of a loan) from the National Funds. Then they make the land arable—that is, they sink a well and drain the swamp—while still living in tents. Then, according to the layout, drafted in common deliberation, some of the *kvutza* members start building dwellings for the community, with a club and children's house, while at the same time the other members start tilling the soil and planting the trees. As life settles down in a young *kvutza*, it slowly increases its membership and the range of its activity, according to the possibilities. They are advised and assisted by agricultural experts of the National Funds, and have been trained in the older *kvutzot* in which they have lived before.

A fully developed *kvutza* consists of about 300 to 700 members (including the children) and is a world of its own. It is, in the first place, a Socialist world. The members have no private property; even the wages which some members earn as industrial workers outside the *kvutza* go into the common chest. Everything the community possesses is owned by all (except the land, which remains national property), and although the members have no share in the collective property, because it is indivisible, they have a stake in it, for as the *kvutza* prospers, its individual members prosper. Although even then their austere ways of life remain on the whole unaltered, their opportunities of cultural life increase as the wealth of the community increases: their libraries grow, and so do the numbers of periodicals they keep in the common reading-room; sometimes they will attend (at the expense of the *kvutza*) a concert or a performance of the *Habima* in the town; they will have their own doctors, dentists, nurses and teachers, and will send some of their children to the high schools.

There is still another type of collective village, the *moshavim*. In these villages the land which the peasants till, the houses in which they live, the machinery which they use, are common property. But each family occupies a house for itself and takes care of its own orchard, vegetable garden, dairy and chicken runs; the grain-fields, however, are cultivated jointly, all marketing is done co-operatively and no private business is carried on. If a peasant is ill or incapacitated, his neighbours cultivate his land for him without compensation.



In these Socialist villages (*kvutzot* and *moshavim* alike) lives the most remarkable peasant population I know. They are, no doubt, first-rate agriculturists, as their amazing success testifies. The "Jewish cow", for example, yields about four times as much milk as the "Arab cow". The Jewish peasants have introduced into Palestine species of plants and trees never before known in this sub-tropical climate. There are craftsmen skilled in every trade that village life requires. Yet at the same time they have retained the intellectual features of townspeople and an ardent interest in the affairs of life, particularly in the development of Socialist thought and the Socialist movement all over the world. In my discussions with them I was surprised to find so much accurate knowledge of events, personalities and the best literature of remote countries. Among these hard-working people there are philosophers and scientists, scholars in many domains of spiritual life, and every one adds somehow to the cultural atmosphere with which that small world is imbued.

I have been told that by now 40,000 men, women and children live in these collective villages.

They form the most important sector of Palestine's Labour movement. But its industrial sector also commands respect.

There are, in the first place, the workers' co-operatives (either directed by, or affiliated, like the *kvutzot*, to the *Histraduth*, the General Federation of Jewish Labour), which in their scope of activity surpass any workers' co-operative movement anywhere. I have seen whole districts of Tel Aviv which have been built by the building-workers' co-operative of the *Histraduth*; it has built highways and dams and even fortifications for the British Government; it has carried out building contracts in Syria, Iraq and even in Iran; it employs architects and engineers in addition to labourers; it is the biggest building enterprise in the country. To take another example, there is the workers' transport co-operative. The bus I used in Tel Aviv, or the coach on my way to Jerusalem or to other districts of the country, is run by a workers' co-operative. There are agricultural workers' co-operatives which sell the products of the workers' villages in the towns and provide the land with machinery and seed. There are workers' co-operatives—their number runs into scores—which own carpentering and metal shops, bakeries, rubber and glass, canning and preserving factories, and even a foundry with 300 workers. A very considerable sector of Palestine's economic life is directly controlled by Labour.

From the workers' villages and the workers' co-operatives the industrial, political and cultural wings of the Palestine Socialist movement branch out. It is as rich and manifold as was the

Viennese Socialist movement. There are, of course, strong trade unions formed by the workers employed in the capitalist sector of Palestine's economy. There are two Socialist parties, both of them affiliated to the *Histraduth*. There is a system of workers' health service, with hospitals and laboratories, controlled by the *Histraduth*. There are Socialist dailies and weeklies, workers' libraries and Socialist Book Clubs. It can truly be said that the Socialist idea and its institutions are the bases of the whole Jewish Palestine society in the making. Should the growth of Jewish Palestine not be frustrated by power politics, then on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean an essentially Socialist commonwealth will emerge, an oasis preserving the best of the Socialist tradition which Europe has produced since Karl Marx, and which has now been lost in the deluge of the Second World War.

Some of my Socialist friends criticise Socialist Zionism for three reasons: firstly, because, they say, it fosters nationalism among the Jewish, and therefore anti-Semitism among the Gentile people; secondly, because it is dependent on the Jewish rich who contribute to the National Funds; thirdly, because it adopts imperialist methods in its claim to a country which belongs to the Arabs.

It is possible to answer the first argument very briefly. The national sentiment expressed by Zionism was stimulated by anti-Semitism (not vice versa); Zionism received a strong impetus from the horrors of the pogroms in Russia and Poland and from Hitler's persecution of the Jews.

So much for the interconnection between Zionism and anti-Semitism. But whatever the repercussions of Zionism might be, it should be remembered that Socialists who do not question (as I certainly do) that nationhood is an essential condition to a full life, and who enjoy it fully and want to maintain it, cannot possibly contest the Jewish claim to the creation of a Jewish nationhood. If Socialist internationalism recognises (as it always did) the right of nationhood of every nation, the very same right cannot be denied to the Jewish people.

Jewish Palestine is now a fact. That country is perhaps more deeply permeated with Socialist spirit than any of the European countries. The Socialists who still dispute the desirability of Zionism are faced with the question of whether they can still remain indifferent (or even hostile) to a community which has to its credit such magnificent Socialist achievements.

The answer to the second question is this: Rich and poor Jews contribute to the National Funds. But however considerable the contribution to the National Funds by a rich Jew might be, he

has in the election of the Zionist Congress only one vote, like the poor Jew. It is the Zionist Congress which determines Jewish policy in Palestine, which elects the Jewish Agency (the recognised representation of the Jewish nation) and controls the National Funds. As the Zionist Congress is a kind of Parliament, it is composed, like every Parliament, of representatives of every class of society. But as the poor are many and the rich few, the working-class influence in the Congress and in the Agency is stronger than the middle-class influence. In fact, the *Histraduth* musters a two-third majority of the votes in Palestine, and the Party of the Socialist Zionists (*Poale-Zion*) occupied half the seats of the Zionist Congress which I attended (at Luzern in 1935). And there is every likelihood that the Socialist influence will grow with the increase of immigration, for it is the poor, not the rich, who emigrate to Palestine.

More complicated is the answer to the third argument, because it raises the intricate question of the claim to unreclaimed lands. Who owns the unreclaimed soil of the earth? What constitutes the right to uncultivated land?

The Socialist theory has always maintained that the lands of the earth belong to the whole of mankind and those who are in need of them shall have the right to cultivate them. Only work on the land constitutes the right to the land.

For example, it is certainly not in accord with Socialist principles when the 7,000,000 Australian people claim the right to close a continent and to lock out perhaps thirty million people which that continent could sustain. The Australians have a perfect right, of course, to insist on safeguarding themselves against a reduction of their standard of life, or against foreign domination. But an immigration which endangers neither the standard of the inhabitants nor their freedom should be free. It was no violation of moral principles when the English Puritans, in the seventeenth century, went to North America and put the vast uncultivated lands under the plough; for, thanks to those pioneers, 140,000,000 people now have a livelihood in a land where previously a bare 150,000 had lived in poverty. Yet, as Roger Williams, the Welsh founder of Rhode Island, complained, they did not pay for the land; they expropriated, exploited, subjected or exterminated the Indians.

Colonisation of unreclaimed land is, then, certainly not in contradiction to Socialist principles if it does not involve the expropriation, exploitation and subjection to foreign domination of the natives who live scattered there.

In the Jewish colonisation of Palestine the Arabs have not suffered expropriation, exploitation or subjection. Even if

Palestine were to become a Jewish State, it would be a bi-national State under a bi-national administration.

Palestine is a comparatively small stretch of the vast Arab peninsula, scarcely bigger than Wales. Before the Jewish mass emigration began, it was a desolate wilderness, as the whole of the Arab world is, covered partly with swamps, partly with deserts or bare rocky mountains. About half a million Arabs and less than 50,000 Jews, suffering severely from malaria and trachome (which often causes blindness), eked out a dismal living.

During the past twenty-five years about half a million Jews have immigrated into Palestine and have settled on barely 6 per cent of the land. How did the Jewish immigration affect the Arab population? Have they been driven out? Have the Jews taken away their land, and have they made them destitute? As a matter of fact, the number of Arabs has since doubled, their standard of life has considerably increased, their state of health has immensely improved, their cultural level has been raised.

When I was in Palestine, in spring 1935, there were exciting conversations among the Jewish settlers about the Huleh project, for the National Funds had acquired that area shortly before. I should like to refer to it, because it appears to me the classical case of the moral Jewish claim to unreclaimed lands in Palestine.

Huleh is a lake in the Upper Jordan Valley near the Syrian frontier. The valley surrounding that lake was once among the most fertile and thickly populated regions of Palestine. Now it is one of the most sparsely populated regions, and among the 20,000 or 25,000 wretched Arabs who live there hardly anyone is not affected by malaria. For now, owing to the neglect of the drainage and irrigation system, most of the Huleh area is covered with swamps.

Huleh's soil is so fertile that if drained it would yield two or three crops yearly and would be able to provide a good livelihood for a quarter of a million people, in addition to the present Arab inhabitants.

Why was it never drained? Well, the whole Huleh district was owned by two wealthy Syrian Arabs who bought the concession for its exploitation from the Turkish Government for £5000 before the last war, in anticipation of a big profit by re-selling it. That is why it was not drained and why it remained a wasteland. But the speculation was sound from a capitalist point of view, for the Jewish National Funds had to pay nearly £200,000 to obtain the land which a quarter of a million people needed so badly.

So a short time after the war, on the soil which was a poisonous

swamp, many workers' villages will arise. The Arab villagers who live there now will remain there and receive nearly a quarter of the drained and irrigated land. It cannot be contested that such a method of colonisation, free from capitalist exploitation, is in accordance with Socialist morale.

Another case in point is the Negeb, a treeless and houseless desert, nearly half the size of the whole of Palestine, stretching from the Judaea Hills south to the Sinai peninsula. Now it serves less than 30,000 Bedouins as grazing ground. Once hundreds of thousands of people lived there, as the remains of their cities, monasteries and wells testify. Hundreds of thousands could live there again if the Negeb were irrigated. In an expert report, submitted to the British Government in 1930, Sir John Hope Simpson stated about the Negeb that "given the possibility of irrigation, there is practically an inexhaustible supply of cultivable land".

There are hundreds of thousands of Jews, driven from their land of birth, who want to go to Palestine to cultivate the Negeb. What is the moral justification for denying that desert to those who are in need of it and who are willing to transform it with their own hands into fertile land? From a Socialist point of view, those who need it and are prepared to work on it have a claim to it.

The Arab nationalists contend: "This is our land, we want to hold what we have got, we don't want Jewish immigration and Jewish irrigation".

The Arabs populate (very sparsely) vast countries of which Palestine is merely a small fraction. Why must they insist upon keeping this stretch of land as well?

They insist upon it for three reasons: Firstly, because every nationalism (including the Arabian) longs to see the national flag wave over the greatest possible part of the earth, even if it consists merely of empty deserts and swamps; secondly, because Jerusalem is one of the holy cities of Islam; thirdly, because the Jewish immigration has brought with it European ideas and standards of life which undermine their own ways of life.

Surely no Socialist will support the Arab's nationalist argument. Nor will Socialism object to the destruction of what Arab nationalists call the Arab "way of life", for the Arab way of life is in fact the worst system of medieval exploitation which the *effendis* have imposed upon the *fellaheen*; if the Jewish immigration hastens the end of that régime, all the better.

As to Jerusalem, it should be remembered that it is also the holy city of Christendom and of the Jews as well, and therefore it should be in the custody of all.

Socialists might, however, contend that if the attempt at the establishment of a Jewish home in Palestine causes so much trouble, why do the Jews not choose another place—say Uruguay or Brazil?

The answer to this contention is that a national home can grow only out of a historical soil. Hebrew lore and Jewish traditions, from which inspirations and the impetus to make sacrifices spring, are interwoven with that barren soil. Therefore, if the Jewish nation is to be re-created, it will be re-created in Palestine and nowhere else.

I realized this when I stood with the late Berl Kaznelson on the plateau of Mount Scopus, looking down from the terrace of the magnificent Hebrew University to Jerusalem. A red carpet of anemones sprinkled with cyclamens and many gorgeous kinds of wild iris covered the slope. Olive trees and sycamores were sparsely scattered over the rugged land, and here and there the silhouette of a solitary Aleppo pine stood out against the clear sky. On the plateau of the opposite hill rose Jerusalem, a bizarre canvas of grey roofs, snow-white domes and dark spires, surrounded by mighty walls and towers and crowned by the shining dome of the Mosque of Omar. It was a sight of great beauty. I said so.

"Believe me," Berl Kaznelson replied, "we have chosen this country not because it is beautiful—it is beautiful to look at, but hard to live in—we chose it because it is our country. Look at Jerusalem. It still bears the imprint of a thousand years of our history. Every stone as far as you can see bears testimony to our claim, because it is a memorial of our past. There is no people in the world which can get rid of its past; the Jews least of all, as they have shown during the two thousand years of Diaspora. So we had to return."

Berl Kaznelson, then the editor of the *Davar*, a Socialist daily of the highest standard, was one of the profoundest and most cultivated Socialists I know, a great internationalist and a great Jew. He gave me much to ponder over.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR  
UNDER THE ENGLISH SKY

"Had we but eyes to lift up,  
The fields are white already."

—Milton, *Areopagitica*.

"ENGLAND is a most strange country, indeed," Friedrich Adler said to me as I left him in Brussels. "When you have lived there for a year or two you may begin to learn to understand it."

That was no exaggeration. Of course I soon learnt to treasure the mellow loveliness of the English countryside, with its unpretentious, graceful Norman churches and pretty cottages; I was delighted with the parks of London, their old trees and wide lawns in the full freshness of green, dotted with golden crocuses, as I saw them in the spring of my arrival. It took some time before I discerned London's majestic beauty amidst its apparent ugliness: the magnificence of the river as it bends between the towers of Parliament and the noble dome of St. Paul's; the delicacy of some of its squares, surrounded by chaste Georgian houses; the serene beauty of its Westminster cloisters. But it took years, just as Friedrich Adler had predicted, to begin to understand the mind and nature of the English people I have now learned to know.

The first thing I experienced was their inexhaustible patience. When I came into this country (nine years ago) my English was frightful. It must have been, I imagine, truly agonising for anyone to listen to it. Yet so many did. They endured it unperturbed, submitting not only with good grace, but with honest human interest.

The second thing I experienced was their sincere kindness of heart. Everywhere in England I found open doors, most generous hospitality and a willingness to help which often moved me deeply.

The third thing I experienced was a great surprise to me: it was the profound warmth of their feelings. From literature (which had been my main source of knowledge of the English character until I met Englishmen in the flesh) I had pictured the average Englishman as sober, placid and taciturn, with the utmost restraint in expressing his sentiments. That was not my experience. The English are undoubtedly the best-mannered people I know;

if I may judge from what I have observed, they also think soberly and are even-tempered; for the rest, I found them rather easy-going, cheerful and straightforward, though reserved in their judgment about men and events. I came to feel happy among them.

What I considered the most wonderful feature of English civilisation is the particular character of its freedom; it is so felicitously balanced by a strong sense of tolerance (although John Morley asserts that Englishmen "when in earnest are as little in love with tolerance as Frenchmen or any other people").\* There was freedom in Austria and Germany before Fascism murdered it. But in those countries freedom was only of recent date. The respect for controversial opinions was not yet as deeply ingrained in the minds of the people in Central Europe as it is in those of the people of 'thinkers who, since Milton wrote his famous *Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*, have never ceased to ponder the problem of freedom. It was always refreshing to watch the crowd surrounding Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park and to observe the humour and frankness of speaker and listener. Utterances of Conservative orators, for example, which would have provoked in a Viennese (or even Parisian) working-class audience furious protests would evoke in London workers merely witty heckling. The orator would listen patiently to the heckler's contentions, and the hecklers in turn would listen patiently to the orator's answer to them, and so it would go on for hours without a brawl. As a matter of fact, I never witnessed a brawl in England during my nine years in this country. When, in a crowded bus, I accidentally jostled someone, he would hasten to assure me that "it's perfectly all right"; in Vienna he would teach me a lesson never to forget; so would a Viennese (or Parisian) taxi-driver who just missed knocking me down. The self-control and mutual consideration so strongly developed by the British people were highly gratifying.

It was also very impressive to see in the serious section of the British Press so many opinions of readers sharply contradicting the opinion of the paper. Such a degree of fairness and respect for freedom of opinion was very rare in the Press of the Continent. No Parliament in the world save the House of Commons could have treated so tactfully and yet so thoroughly so delicate an emergency as the King's abdication.

I experienced this admirable respect for opinion in a noteworthy personal instance. In the heat of the war I ventured to write a book which was rather critical of a powerful current in this country; it was an outspoken plea for the survival of the Germans

\* John Morley, *On Compromise*, p. 85.



as a nation.\* I felt I had to write it, though I was aware that such an enterprise was somehow audacious for a guest of this country, a refugee, and an Austrian officially regarded as a "technically enemy alien". Before I began to write it, I asked my friend Victor Gollancz whether he would be prepared to publish it. "Of course," he said and sent me a contract the next day.

What would have been impossible in any other country on earth now happened. While Britain was engaged in a life-and-death struggle against the German people, a book defending the German people by, as I said, an "enemy alien", appeared in this country and was received by the British Press, though not without some criticism, yet throughout with respect for an opinion considered sincere. Only one paper alluded to the extraordinary circumstances of the appearance of the book and said rightly: "The fact may pass unnoticed—so completely taken for granted, even under war restrictions, is the British instinct of freedom—but it is worth remarking that this book is by an Austrian, and that it is chiefly devoted to a vigorous condemnation of a peace settlement imposed on Germany after the last Great War, and to the advocacy of a policy which, if followed, would leave Greater Germany—regenerated, pacific and revolutionised on Socialist lines, it is true—a strong united Power." †

I often contemplated the phenomenon of the English temper, behaviour and tolerance, in many ways so different from anything on the Continent. I explained it by the most fortunate geography and history of England, which has so bountifully bestowed on her people security and wealth. It was, in the first place, geography which has made safe

"This precious stone set in the silver sea,  
Which serves it in the office of a wall,  
Or as a moat defensive to a house,  
Against the envy of less happier lands".

Since 1066 no foreign arms have raged on England's soil.‡ Barely three or four times during the lifetime of almost thirty generations past have English people seen the horrible phantom of an invasion emerge from the mists veiling the Continent; but the phantom has never materialised. No enemy has trodden the soil of the country since William the Conqueror. So a feeling of

\* *Need Germany Survive?*, 1943.

† *The Times Literary Supplement*, June 12, 1943. It is interesting to note that the only abusive comment on the book and its author, written by an Englishman, was published in an American paper.

‡ The "invasions" of William of Orange, in 1688, as of the Highlanders, in 1745, were not proper invasions, but civil wars, though in both some foreign troops were employed.

absolute security against the ravages of war developed amongst the people of this country. When there were wars in the world, their theatres were remote lands, and certainly not England.

The people of Europe have never known such a sweet feeling of security. On the Continent there is scarcely a stretch of land which was not once despoiled by the havoc of war.\* In my own lifetime I never remember an extended period of peaceful stability. From the moment when I began to see the world, the ghosts of wars and upheavals haunted its stage. In 1905 I experienced the war crisis over Morocco, in which Austria was involved, as an ally of Germany; three years later Austria stood again on the verge of war (against Russia) brought about by the Hapsburg annexation of Bosnia; only four years later we again faced the imminent emergence of war when, during the Balkan wars, the Hapsburgs intended to seize the Sandjhak; and in another two years the much-dreaded war had become a reality: the Russians stood before the gates of Cracow on their road to Budapest and Vienna. Then came the collapse of the Austrian Empire, with its fearful consequences. It was not a prelude to a period of stability. During the twenty years up to the Second World War we felt as though we lived on a volcano. First there was famine; then there was a state of prolonged civil war (caused by the economic distress and international instability which enormously increased the social tension); and then there were a series of *coups de force* which ultimately caused the collapse of Europe. That atmosphere of external, internal and, above all, economic insecurity which surrounded the life of the Continental people was no healthy condition for the growth of that balance of mind and temper, and of that wonderful sense of tolerance, which distinguish the English.

But geography and history have, it appears, at the same time somehow alienated the English from the peoples of the Continent. I found an astonishing lack of knowledge of, and hardly any keen interest in European affairs among, the many Englishmen I met.

I arrived in this country on the very day when Hitler marched into the Rhineland. I was amazed to observe that most Englishmen, even Socialists among them, had no objection whatever to Hitler's first step on his road of conquest. "After all, the Rhineland is German, and why shouldn't German troops be there?" they said.

I was still more amazed to see in the *Daily Herald* frequent articles written by a Viennese journalist who frankly admitted in the columns of the Labour Party's paper having been sent by

\* Of the three hundred years from 1618 to 1918 roughly 125 have seen Germany (including Austria), or parts of Germany, involved in wars, mostly on German or Austrian territories.

Dollfuss, after he had slaughtered the Austrian Socialist movement, to this country as his propaganda agent. I attributed such excesses of tolerance to the absence of insight into the nature of the events beyond the Channel.\*

I observed also the absence of that Socialist passion which was such a dynamic force in the Continental Labour movements, especially in Austria and Germany. Here in England Socialist meetings were comparatively rare, and seldom packed. I wondered before I came to this country why England, with so large a proportion of industrial workers, is predominantly ruled by the Tories. I hesitated to conclude that Socialism was probably an alien conception to them. When I knew English working-class people better, it appeared to me as though they were less politically minded than Continental workers. They seemed to be accessible to the Socialist idea; indeed, their natural sense of fairness and justice invites its acceptance. Yet there seemed to be something wanting in the structure of the British Labour movement, necessary if Socialist sentiments and passions were to be aroused.

It required several years to begin to understand the character of the British Labour movement. The Labour movement on the Continent—I speak not only of the Austrian or German, but of the Labour movements of Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, Sweden and so many other countries as well—was a living Socialist movement. It developed a profusion of Socialist institutions, and the life of their individual members was intensely interwoven with the life of the movement.

The British Labour movement appeared to be no part of the life of its average members. To be quite accurate, it might perhaps be questioned whether it is to be termed a movement, in the sense of an organism of which its cells (the individual members) compose a living whole. It is, in the first place, a vast trade-union organisation, and only in the second place a political organisation; the former serving in the main the promotion of the workers'

\* It is perhaps possible to apply a sterner moral standard to the indulgence Dollfuss enjoyed in this country, even in some Left circles. Because Dollfuss opposed Hitler and became a victim of Hitler's assassins, some people were inclined to forget his earlier crimes. It might suffice to recall John Morley's observations on a similar case; he wrote about the indulgence Napoleon III enjoyed in England as follows: "Some apparent advantages followed for a season from a rule which had its origin in a violent and perfidious usurpation, and which was upheld by all arts of moral corruption, political enervation, and military repression. The advantages lasted long enough to create in this country a steady and powerful opinion that Napoleon the Third's early crime was redeemed by the seeming prosperity that followed. The shocking prematureness of this shallow condonation is now too glaringly visible for any one to deny it."—John Morley, *On Compromise*, 1874, pp. 15–16.

conditions, the latter serving chiefly as an electioneering machine. The educational side of the Labour movement which played an all-important part on the Continent is comparatively very small in Britain. Thus Socialist thought occupies merely a tiny province in the minds of the British working masses; it appears to be confined to the intellectual strata of the Labour community.

The difference between the attitude of the Continental and the British Socialist movements must certainly be understood in the light of the different history of both. It cannot be a mere coincidence that Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation, based on the Marxian conception of Socialism, proved a complete failure while the Fabians' conception of gradualism prevailed. The same geographical and historical factors—producing Britain's unique economic position in the nineteenth century—which had favoured the gradual development of British democracy, undoubtedly also favoured the trend of gradualism in Socialist thought.

It might perhaps be possible to explain the spiritual difference between British and Continental Socialism from the fact that British Socialism received its spiritual impetus from such a variety of writings as Tom Paine's *The Rights of Man*, John Stuart Mill's *The Principles* and those of Henry George, Robert Owen and William Morris, while Continental Socialism derived its impetus mainly from Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto*. In England it was the middle-class movement of the Radicals which obtained the leadership of the working class after the final collapse of Chartism. Thus the process of political segregation of the British working class from the middle class, and of the forming of an independent working-class Party, was concluded only at the close of the past century—that is, many decades after the French, German, Austrian, Italian and Swiss Socialist Parties had been founded.

On the Continent, especially in France, Germany and Austria, the middle classes immediately turned their guns on the working class after they had, with the help of the working class, broken the monopoly of political power which the feudal class had enjoyed. From the middle of the last century onwards the political scene in all industrial countries on the Continent was dominated by the class struggle between Labour and the moneyed classes; in England, until the close of the nineteenth century, it was dominated by the struggle among the propertied classes themselves—that is, between the land-owning and the trading and manufacturing classes, and not by the class struggle of Labour. In England many trade union leaders were still genuine Liberals, not Socialists, as late as thirty years ago. It impressed me strongly when an old lady (who attended a lecture I gave to an audience of the National Council of Labour Colleges in Bournemouth) enthusi-

astically recalled Gladstone's speeches as a great source of Socialist inspiration. It appeared that while in Germany Lassalle and Bebel, in France Jean Jaurès, in Austria Victor Adler were the political idols of the workers, in Britain they were Cobden, Bright and Gladstone until Keir Hardie's advent.

The spiritual difference between British and Continental Socialism springs, further, from their difference of outlook on religious affairs. It was most strange for Viennese Socialists to learn that prominent leaders of the British Socialists used to preach from the pulpit on Sundays; French, German or Italian Socialists might have got the same strange impression. For the Continental Socialist movement, especially in France, Italy, Spain, Austria and Germany, was most pronouncedly anti-Clerical; it fought the political aspirations of the Catholic (in Germany the Lutheran) Church as the most reactionary force of society, and fostered agnostic and free-thinking tendencies among the workers. Conversely, the Catholic Church as well as the Lutheran regarded Marxist Socialism as heresy. So Church and Socialism on the Continent were always at loggerheads.\*

How surprised I was when I saw in the English May Day procession clergymen walking behind red flags to Hyde Park; or when I myself was invited to make a speech in a church; or when I learned that a number of British vicars, and even deans, were most sincere Socialists! And I also learned that many British Socialists were most sincerely religious. It was an entirely new phenomenon. Nonconformity, by abolishing the State Church monopoly in religious thought, had enabled the development of such a variety of Churches, and such a flexibility of religious thought, as to reconcile strong Socialist conviction with religious inclination. Moreover, Nonconformity, struggling for centuries against cruel persecution and savage suppression, appeared to many Socialist workers a symbol of freedom and equality, and Christianity, as preached by Nonconformity—and even by some High Churchmen—as the message meant for the poor. This religious hue of the British Socialist ideology, embodied, for example, in George Lansbury and Stafford Cripps, differentiates it most strikingly from the ideology of Continental Socialism.

I was fortunate enough to be invited by Sir Stafford Cripps to join the editorial staff of the *Tribune*, which he was about to launch at the end of 1936; for it was indeed the best practical school for the study of British Labour I could wish.

There I worked on the foreign side of the paper under the editorship of the late William Mellor and in close fellowship with

\* One remarkable exception was the collaboration of the German Social Democrats and the Catholic Centre Party during the Weimar Republic.

my most generous friend Michael Foot. To both of them I owe a debt of deep gratitude, for they never failed a helpless fellow, scarcely able to speak, still less to write, properly in English. Though Mellor's health and nerves were not of the best, he would never excuse himself from the strain of listening to my suggestions and encouraging me to carry them out. So also with Michael Foot: he would patiently correct my rotten style, or even re-write my well-meant but unreadable stuff, and always explain, as they came up, the peculiarities of English policy; he also introduced me to the historical literature of England, often bringing along the books he wanted me to read. At the weekly editorial meetings, never missed by Sir Stafford, and often attended by Professor Harold J. Laski, Aneurin Bevan and George Strauss, the easy chats about men and events in England's political life were an invaluable source of knowledge of a world strange to me.

I also considered myself most lucky in getting to know Frank Horrabin and J. P. M. Millar, for both are not only Socialists of the British type which comes nearest to the Continental, but they are also responsible for the National Council of Labour Colleges: Frank Horrabin as one of its co-founders and J. P. M. Millar as its General Secretary. Millar, taking a chance, sent me chasing all over the country as a lecturer. In these meetings I faced the most intelligent and alert section of the British workers, and, from the questions and discussions after the lectures, I am sure I learned more from them than they did from me.

During these years of my English apprenticeship the shape of the cataclysm to come emerged discernible from the horizon of the world. Ethiopia, as well as China, was the test case of the League of Nations, and Spain that of European democracy; because democracy failed, the League was bound to fail. And because European democracy failed in Spain, German Fascism could confidently prepare its inroads into Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland. The tragedy of Spain became the pattern of the tragedy of Europe.

England, it appeared, accepted the challenge of Fascism with utter resignation. Professor A. Toynbee, in discussing (disapprovingly) the "Defeatist-Diehard point of view", showed to what length in sacrificing vital parts of the British and French empires to German, Italian and Japanese Fascism influential Conservative circles were prepared to go to avert the conflict with Fascism.\* The same mood of resignation also appeared to prevail among the Left. I remember a kind of editorial lunch of the *New Statesman and Nation* (immediately after Hitler's march

\* Arnold J. Toynbee, *The Issue in British Foreign Policy in International Affairs*, 1938, p. 323.

into Austria) to which Kingsley Martin, who had received me most kindly when I came to this country, invited me. There was agreement on the assumption that Hitler would now proceed to seize Czechoslovakia and incorporate the whole of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe in the German orbit. Kingsley Martin, H. N. Brailsford and, if I remember rightly, Leonard Woolf, held that the Tories would certainly not resist seriously, because they were more afraid of a Socialist revolution in Germany, which might be unleashed by Hitler's overthrow, than by Hitler-Germany's extension of power. I still hear the ring of Kingsley Martin's voice when he remarked: "Well, then Hitler will turn against Russia with the connivance of the Tories, and after he has conquered her, England will be at Hitler's mercy; a very clever policy, isn't it?"

The difference between the Conservative "Defeatist-Diehards" and the Left was that the first expressed the mood of those who had the power to crush Hitler, even without resorting to war, while the second expressed the mood of those who appeared paralysed by their own powerlessness.

It should, however, be noted that the Labour Party was powerless not only because it was not in the Government, but also because its pacifist traditions impeded the vigour of its initiative.

I felt this trend of feeling most strongly when, shortly after my arrival in this country, I visited H. N. Brailsford (to whom I was introduced by a letter from Otto Bauer). Mr. Brailsford received me in his cottage with his irresistible warmth, and a hospitality so unpretentious and yet so considerate and generous. For the first time in my life, too, I enjoyed the infinite grace of an English week-end, leisure developed to a great art. H. N. Brailsford would take me for a walk and would talk about birds and flowers with an intensity of interest and an intimate knowledge which we townspeople on the Continent have entirely lost. Then, after lunch, he would leave me alone at my pleasure, and would only join me when he felt I might like it; then he would talk about Goethe and the German classics, or about Hegel's influence on English philosophical thought, and then he would select from his beautiful library of gramophone records something of Beethoven or Bach or Purcell, and would delight in it together with his guest. Such was our happy week-end, the pattern of so many others I enjoyed with my English and Scottish friends; and such was the man whose breadth of mind and brilliance of style I had always admired from afar.

I knew that Mr. Brailsford had refused to sign a statement, drafted by Otto Bauer, on the international policy of European Labour in the event of war. Otto Bauer, perceiving in 1936 the

inevitability of war between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy on the one side, and Britain, France and Russia on the other, postulated as Labour's historical rôle the support of the war in order to destroy Fascism. The working classes should see clearly the true nature of the war, Otto Bauer said; so long as war is prosecuted by the ruling classes of Britain and France, it will retain its imperialist character. Because of its imperialist character, the rulers of Britain and France would not wage the war *à outrance*, lest Hitler's collapse might unleash the Socialist revolution in Germany; they would, Otto Bauer predicted with an amazing foresight, at a certain stage of the war attempt to conclude with the Fascists a compromise peace (as the French actually did). This would be the moment for the working classes to rally the democratic and patriotic masses of the nations, to seize power in the State by a supreme effort and turn the imperialist war into a Socialist war. This was the statement which Otto Bauer had submitted to Brailsford (and wanted to have adopted as the considered policy of the Labour and Socialist International).

Mr. Brailsford, who had so resolutely rejected any support of the last Great War, on Socialist grounds, refused to support any war policy of imperialist governments in power. But this attitude was by no means determined by pacifist motives. He faced squarely the facts. He realised earlier than any British Socialist Hitler's aggressive designs. When Hitler marched into the Rhineland (in March 1936) Brailsford was now convinced that he was preparing for a war of conquest. Brailsford now pleaded for a policy of firm resistance against Hitler; he even advocated (in *Reynolds News*) the need for conscription in Britain, as early as April 1936 (on condition, however, that the Tory Government's policy of appeasing the Fascists was abandoned). But he knew, too, how deeply the pacifist tradition was rooted in the British Labour Movement, and that, if he signed Otto Bauer's statement, he would raise expectations among the Continental Socialists which, under the then existent pacifist mood of the British Labour Party, would not materialise. Pacifism was then undoubtedly the strongest trait in the minds of the British Socialists.

Pacifism was, indeed, British Labour's most honourable contribution to European civilisation. The British Labour Party was firmly resolved to make the idea of the League of Nations an effective instrument for the maintenance of peace; it stood squarely for collective security as well as international disarmament. The farther the Tories deviated from League principles, the stronger became Labour's insistence upon them.

So in the critical phase of European development British Labour was faced with a tragic conflict. The desertion of the



League's principles by the Tories had encouraged the Fascist Powers. Hitler's and Mussolini's feverish rearmament and their cumulative acts of aggression surely demanded the rearmament of the democratic Powers. British Labour, however, hesitated to support the armament policy of a Tory Government which had never professed to stand for democracy in Europe, but, on the contrary, had tried to appease Fascism, and had by that fostered it.

I left England in midsummer 1938, when Friedrich Adler, after Otto Bauer's death, asked me to join him in Brussels to assist in his work as Secretary of the Labour and Socialist International. It was the most fateful year in the history of international Socialism. Hitler's drive for the domination of Europe could be thwarted only if it was countered by a phalanx of the European democracies. It appeared to be the task of the Labour Parties to rally the democracies behind a common policy aiming at resistance to Fascism and ultimately at its final defeat. It appeared, too, that the British and French Socialist Parties (as the Parties of the big countries) had to take the lead. While Léon Blum, spokesman of the French Socialists, was aware of his duty, the spokesman of the British Labour Party (Mr. William Gillies) apparently failed to see the part assigned to him by history. The most amazing outcome was that, in the gravest ordeal of humanity, the Socialist International relinquished its function.

It was understood between Dr. Adler and myself that I would return to England should war break out. This I did on the very day it was declared. I thought that this war offered to international Labour a supreme opportunity to realise what it professed and to secure the final victory for Socialism.

The dual character of the war was evident. The ruling classes of Britain and France had taken up Hitler's challenge not for the maintenance of democracy "in far-away countries of which we know little", but for the maintenance of the power of their own empires in the world. However, in this power struggle of contending imperialisms, the British and the French, in repelling the attack of German Fascist imperialism, had to resort to the ideology of democracy; they had to wage the war in the name of the Rights of Man and had to present the war as a contest of rival ideologies.

Indeed, in this war more was at stake than the imperialist position of the Great Western Powers. In fact, every European country was menaced by a barbaric invasion aiming not merely at the extinction of the identity of the nations, but also at the obliteration of the Rights of Labour. The British worker, for example, who supported the war effort of a Conservative régime, defended actually not only the British Empire and the independence of his country against foreign domination, but also the rights of free

workers, the right to organise themselves, to assemble at their own bidding, to speak their minds, to strive for influence and power in the State. In short, everything was imperilled that had been won for human liberty and the rights of Labour during the centuries since the Reformation.

Because all classes of society were menaced by the same foe, it was the vital common interest of all classes to repel and defeat him. This was the substance of the common purpose which united capitalists and workers, Conservatives and Socialists, reactionaries and revolutionaries.

But though there was agreement between the classes of society with respect to war aims (the defeat of the common enemy), there could necessarily be none with respect to peace aims (the settlement of the world after the war). It is self-evident that the peace aims of imperialists and capitalists must differ fundamentally from the peace aims of Socialists and workers.

To British imperialists this war was just one of the great national wars which have filled the annals of the past centuries: a struggle for hegemony in Europe. To them it was all the same whether Spain, France or Germany aspired to it; whoever it was had to be fought and defeated to restore the balance of power. That Germany was a Fascist State was entirely irrelevant to the British imperialists; of relevance was only the fact that German imperialism strove for the domination of the European Continent. Therefore it had to be crushed.

This outlook determines the peace aims of the imperialists. They aim at the destruction of Germany as a Power and at the restoration of the balance of power between the victorious Powers through a system of treaties, embodied, as they might be, in legal institutions. For the rest, they would retain the principles on which the pre-war national and international fabric of capitalism and imperialism was based.

To Socialists the war appeared to be one of the gigantic convulsions produced by the antagonisms inherent in the economic and international anarchy of capitalist-imperialist society. None of the essential causes which brought about ever-recurrent economic crises and international conflagrations would be eliminated by the destruction of Germany, if the very principles of anarchy on which the economic structure and the relations between nations have hitherto rested were to remain.

This outlook should, it was thought, determine the peace aims of the workers. As anarchic economy is the source of misery, it must be replaced by planned economy; as the unlimited sovereignty of nation-States is the source of international strife, it must be restricted by the supreme sovereignty of a super-organisa-

tion of nations. Socialist economy and institutional unity of the world, or at least of Europe, appeared to be the aims for which international Labour would have to fight in this war. It appeared, too, that the appalling bankruptcy of the capitalist-imperialist system, which manifested itself so glaringly in two world wars during the lifetime of a generation, would offer international Labour the great opportunity to arouse the understanding and enthusiasm of the masses of the peoples for those aims.

This hope was all the more strongly fortified by the expectation that Hitler's defeat would bring about the Socialist revolution in Germany, Italy, and in all European countries submerged by Fascism, for the alternative to Fascism is Socialism, unless foreign imperialist forces restore the capitalist system in the defeated countries. It could also be assumed that Socialist revolutions in many parts of Europe would immensely foster Labour's influence in the remaining countries and would alter decisively in its favour the power relations between the classes of society. I did indeed believe, when the war broke out, that humanity stood on the threshold of a new age.

This buoyant expectation was not quite unjustified by the mood I found in this country. There was an entire absence of hysteria, excitement and hatred, but a sober realisation of the true nature of the war: a war to change the economic and international conditions which had made possible Fascism and its war. The British people seemed to feel that German Fascism, against which they fought with such grim determination, was not a German peculiarity, but an emanation of the chaotic economic conditions of the capitalist system and the principle of power which ruled international relations. It appeared, too, that the masses of the British people had awakened to the perception of a new economic and international order which would be able to preclude the recurrence of the disaster.

How deeply rooted this mood was became manifest in the supreme crisis of the war, when France fell and, a few months later, the Blitz started. The attitude which the British people then assumed will be remembered in the history of mankind until its last day.

This is what happened. Hitler had conquered the European Continent. Russia and the United States of America were still neutral. Britain stood alone. She was almost unarmed. Night after night, for more than three months, an armada of German bombers circled over London and showered down upon the city fire, death and destruction. Britain faced an enemy greatly superior in the air and a thousandfold superior in guns, tanks and trained troops. Invasion was expected at any moment. And most

British people knew that if Hitler did set his formidable war machine in motion against this island, and if he landed from the air and ashore his tens of thousands of tanks and guns and his millions of soldiers, they would have to fight a desperate battle with no more prospect than Leonidas' 300 men at the Pass of Thermopylae; for there were hardly any tanks and guns, and not even enough rifles and machine-guns, with which to meet the Germans.

Yet the British people stood firm. It appeared that every one of them felt that, if they were to yield, the flame of liberty would be extinguished all over the world. They felt, however vaguely, that they had been called upon by destiny to uphold the torch of humanity. It seemed that this feeling was the miraculous source of the wonderful fortitude which they displayed in these ninety-seven consecutive nights of the Blitz.

But still more significant was another event during this ordeal. While night after night German bombers killed and burnt British people and wrecked their homes, this island was the scene of a truly edifying spectacle. Nothing would have been more natural than a surge of British hatred of the "enemy aliens" in their midst. But just the contrary was the case. The British people, mourning for the loved ones they had lost in the German air raids and themselves threatened by the Germans with death or mutilation, impatiently urged on the Government the release of the Germans and Austrians interned for security reasons after the fall of France. It seemed that the majority of the British people felt that most of the interned Germans and Austrians were like themselves victims of the Nazi fury, and that they should therefore be treated as friends, and not as foes.

This attitude revealed not only the greatness of the British people and their unparalleled tolerance, but, above all, their true opinion of the nature of the war. They did not indulge in national hatred against the Germans, because they did not regard the war as a national war, but as a war of liberation from Fascism.

The feeling towards the war of what was apparently the majority of the British people was expressed, soon after its beginning, by Mr. C. R. Attlee in a memorable speech, in which he emphasised that "although this war is the direct result of Nazi aggression, we must recognise that there have been other acts of aggression in the past; that for centuries, at intervals long or short, the world had been plunged into wars"; and that "the conditions which from time to time result in war must be removed if peace is to be something more than an interval between wars". He proclaimed that "nothing less than the establishment of a New World Order is required", a New World Order founded on

“an international authority superior to the individual States and endowed not only with rights over them, but also with the power to make them effective, operating not only in the political, but also in the economic sphere”. And he exclaimed: “Europe must federate or perish”.\*

The essentials of this statement were embodied, about six months later, in the Peace Declaration of the British Labour Party, adopted by its Executive on February 9, 1940, and endorsed by the Labour Conference at Bournemouth (Whitsun 1940). In demanding the establishment of “a new Association or Commonwealth of States”, it proclaimed that “a new world order, which applies these principles, can only be securely founded on Socialism and Democracy”.

British Labour also expressed the feelings of the majority of the people when it rejected vindictive terms to be imposed upon the German people. Mr. C. R. Attlee proclaimed, as the first principle of the peace settlement, “that there should be no dictated peace. We have no desire to humiliate, to crush or to divide the German nation. There must be restitutions made to the victims of aggression, but all ideas of revenge and punishment must be excluded.”

The Bournemouth Declaration went even farther. It explicitly demanded “that undertakings shall be given to the German people that, in the general rearrangement after the war, the just and real interests of all people will be respected, including those of the German people”. And it added: “History teaches that any attempt to keep Germany an outcast after the war, or to deprive her of such security as her neighbours rightly claim for themselves, will fail. The most farsighted and least dangerous policy is to seek to win the co-operation, as an equal partner, of a Germany governed by a political system whose aims and needs run parallel with ours.”†

However, this state of mind did not last to the end; it developed into what Mr. Attlee had foreseen when he warned the British workers “to see to it that the cause for which we have taken up arms is not submerged in the passions which war excites”.

The Nazis had, in the name of the German people, perpetrated unspeakable cruelties; tens of thousands of Germans have been instrumental in carrying them out. It was only natural that tortured humanity began to hate and to despise the German people indiscriminately.

It could have been expected, however, that at least Socialists, acquainted with Marx’s materialist conception of history, should realise that the behaviour of people is conditioned by historic cir-

\* *Labour’s Aims in War and Peace*, p. 101.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 90, 91.

cumstances. There is no people in the world—however kind-hearted under normal conditions—who would not lose their human sense in certain circumstances.\* Hitler starved and tortured to death millions of his opponents; Louis XIV starved to death 6,000,000 of his own countrymen. "It would be easy to find tyrants more violent, more malignant, more odious than Louis XIV, but there was not one who ever used his power to inflict greater suffering or greater wrong; and the admiration with which he inspired the most illustrious men of his time denotes the lowest depth to which the turpitude of absolutism has ever degraded the conscience of Europe." † I do not know any people more human and considerate than the English. And yet, even these "dear, dear souls" exulted in repulsive behaviour in certain circumstances. "Men," J. G. Godard recorded during the Boer War, "were demoniacal in their animosity, gloried in revenge, and gloated over carnage. A free press promulgated slander and falsehood, and advocated the slaughter of prisoners of war. A brave enemy was denounced in such terms as 'banditti, filibusters and ruffians'. . . . Farms and homesteads were wantonly and insanely destroyed, until nearly the whole territory was laid waste. Men were threatened with expatriation for resisting aggression; women were placed on short rations because their husbands refused to surrender. Captured foes were arraigned before military tribunals composed of their enemies, and then shot in cold blood; 'rebels' were hanged like felons when the ties of race and their sense of justice proved stronger than their allegiance to a despotic power; and the infernal atrocity was committed of compelling their relatives and friends to witness the ghastly scene, presumably that the iron might enter into their souls. And, finally, some fifteen thousand little children were immolated on the altar of the empire, a holocaust which might put pagans to shame. . . ." ‡

\* In certain circumstances the dormant instincts of cruelty and destruction man has inherited from primeval ages are revived and may burst all inhibitions of civilisation. Winston Churchill, witnessing the cruelty of the Battle of Omdurman, where British soldiers slaughtered the blacks in their chains "with bayonets running blood", observed: "The sentiment that the British soldier is incapable of brutality is one which never fails to win the meed of popular applause; but there are in fact a considerable proportion of cruel men in every army. . . . The unmeasured terms in which the Dervishes had been described in the newspapers, and the idea which had been laboriously circulated of 'avenging Gordon', had inflamed their passions, and had led them to believe that it is quite correct to regard their enemy as vermin—unfit to live. The result was that there were many wounded Dervishes killed."—Winston Churchill, *The River War*, vol. I, pp. 434–5 and vol. II, p. 195.

† Acton, *The History of Freedom and other Essays*, p. 49.

‡ John George Godard, *Racial Supremacy*, p. 13.

Socialists, I think, should be the first to realise that the social and economic conditions are the determining factors in men's behaviour, and that if we want a truly human society we must create truly human conditions. In pondering the phenomenon of the Inquisition, its cruelty and baseness, Acton observed: "Man is not an abstraction, but a manufactured product of the society with which he stands or falls, which is answerable for the crimes that are the shadow and the echo of its nobler vices, and has no right to hang the rogue it rears." \* The acquisitive society in which we live breeds wars and Hitlers and tortures and concentration camps; it is certainly not yet a truly human society. It is useless to indulge in hatred and revenge; the task is to alter the conditions which sometimes reduce mankind to beasts.

Yet although during the five and a half years of the war in England I had observed no popular hatred of the Germans (except in a certain Press, which had distinguished itself before the war by the warmth of its sympathy for the Hitler régime), and although the rank and file of British Socialists kept German Nazis and German Socialists apart, there was slowly growing a tendency among leading Socialists to yield "to the passions which war excites".

This tendency became manifest in the refusal of representative Socialists of several countries to reconstitute the Socialist International, if it should mean the admittance of German Socialists as equal members. There were Socialists (among them notably such an eminent Socialist as Mr. Camille Huysmans, President of the Labour and Socialist International) who accepted the theory that militarism and Fascism were features ingrained in the minds of the German people, and that there is no difference between German Nazis and German Socialists. The *Statement on the German Problems*, adopted by the Conference (held in London, March 1945) of the European Socialist Parties (from which the German, Austrian and Sudeten-German Socialists were excluded, and which was not attended by representatives of the Swedish and Swiss Socialists) accordingly postulated (against the protests, however, of the French and Italian delegations and some individual members of the British and Belgian delegations) "a collective guilt" of the "people of Germany", and declared that by the crimes of Hitlerite Germany, "she has, for a long period, forfeited the right of the German nation to exercise free self-determination. . . . For the German people as a whole must suffer the consequences of their acts." † The statement does not distinguish

\* Acton, *ibid.*, p. 572.

† *The Times*, March 7, 1945.

between German capitalists and German workers, between German imperialists and German pacifists, between German Fascists and German Socialists. The very words "German Socialists" are omitted; for the representatives of the European Socialist Parties (with the exception of the French and Italian), as they were assembled in London, apparently German Socialists did not exist. Everything German Socialism had contributed during almost a century to the emancipation of the workers all over the world was forgotten, the record of its fights against militarism and Fascism obliterated, the legions of its martyrs who had perished in Hitler's torture chambers had perished in vain. German Socialists were cast out of the international brotherhood.

This trend of mood is a symptom of the change in the Socialist attitude towards Fascism and the war. In the beginning the opinion prevailed among Socialists of every nationality that Fascism is the worst form of capitalist class domination and the most accentuated expression of national imperialism. From this theory the Socialists derived the opinion that no country is immune against Fascism, and that, if the world were to be made safe from Fascism, the conditions which produce it must be removed. Many Socialists therefore regarded this war as a world revolution, because they assumed that it would not merely destroy German Fascism, but would create new conditions of a nature which would preclude the emergence of Fascism all over the world. They strove for a New World Order, a true Socialist Commonwealth of States, based on international economic planning and penetrated with the humanitarian idea of international Socialism. That was the Socialist vision of the world to emerge from the gigantic welter of blood and tears.

Yet in the course of the war these aims receded, in fact vanished. The Socialists who participated in governments of national unity adopted (with the exception of the French) step by step the ideology of the nationalistic and imperialist partners in the governments with whom they had to share the responsibility for the prosecution of the war; they even participated in the imperialist scramble for power and territories. For those Socialists the war had ceased to be a world revolution; it became a national war. Their war aim was no longer the conquest of Fascism in whatever garb, and the change of the conditions which produce Fascism, but the conquest of the German people. Their peace aim was no longer a New World Order, but a new Power alliance; not the unity of Europe, but the creation of a vast void in the heart of Europe; not a peace of reconciliation, but a peace of revenge,

" . . . at first though sweet,  
Bitter ere long, back on itself recoils".



For the first time in the history of the Socialist movement there were Socialists who advocated not only annexations, but even the expulsion of millions of men, women and children from their homes and the lands of their ancestors. When Czar Alexander wished to annex the Duchy of Warsaw, in 1815, Talleyrand, writing to Metternich, protested that: "To acknowledge the legitimacy of these claims would be to admit . . . that peoples may be treated like cattle on a farm". Although since then another 130 years' history of human liberty have elapsed, there are still even Socialists who feel no objection to treating peoples "like cattle on a farm".

This attitude signifies nothing less than the entire collapse of everything Socialism stood for. It signifies the divorce of ethics from politics and the adoption of the thesis that "in the historical world there are no ideals but only facts—no truths, but only facts. There is no reason, no equity, no final aim, but only facts. . . ." \* It signifies the triumph of Machiavellian materialism in morals and politics.

This attitude is a calamity of the first order, because it is bound to destroy faith and belief in Socialism as a moral movement. For if representatives of Socialism relinquish the principles of internationalism and connive at, and even plead for the mass sacrifice of human beings to the idol of nationalism, then Democracy and Socialism are hollow words of which the world will become weary.

In fact, the words Democracy and Socialism, used so frequently in the *Manifesto* issued by the London Conference of the European Socialist Parties, are in their context with the content of the whole document worse than hollow: they are masked words disguising the very opposite of their real connotation.

The *Manifesto* states, for instance: "More than ever before Socialism remains faithful to the old belief in the trinity of arbitration, security and disarmament". But in the same breath it endorses "the Dumbarton Oaks proposals as modified at Yalta" as the "basis of a new security organisation".

The system of Dumbarton Oaks never can provide security. It even falls behind the League system, because it refuses openly and in advance (in its Yalta "modifications") to provide security against the only cases of aggression which ever can occur: aggression by a Great Power or by a satellite which can count on a Great Power's support. This "new security organisation" is based, just as the old was, solely upon the goodwill of the Great

\* Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, vol. II, p. 368. Quoted with approval by the British Fascist James Drennan, B.U.F., *Oswald Mosley and British Fascism*, 1934, p. 183.

Powers. If this goodwill is wanting—that is, if the national interests of the Great Powers conflict (for instance, in the spheres of influence of Russia and Britain in Europe, or of Russia and the United States in the Far East)—then there will be no security, but war.

The Dumbarton Oaks system rests on the assumption that the Great Powers have an equal and direct interest in the eternal preservation of the redistributed earth as it will result from the war. But such an assumption is not borne out by history. Under changed conditions the *status quo* may become obsolete. And so long as the principle of national sovereignty is upheld—that is, so long as power is acknowledged (if not in words but certainly in fact) to be the sole arbiter in the conflict of interests between States—so long does war remain a possibility, nay, a probability. It is not beyond human imagination to discern even at this early stage of development the shape of the Third Great War to come.

The Dumbarton Oaks system leaves the principles of power politics in full force; it restricts the sovereignty only of the small, but not of the big countries; it does not create an institutional guarantee of peace. As in the past, so in the future, peace will be based solely on the power of arms, not on the organisation of an integral unity of the world. In other words: peace will be maintained so long as there is a balance of power—that is, in military terms, a balance of the war potentials. The era to come, therefore, will be marked, firstly, by the most intense world armament drive ever experienced in the history of the human race, and secondly, by an aggravated economic nationalism as a condition for the production of the biggest possible industrial war potential. At Dumbarton Oaks were, unwittingly, hewed the cross and forged the nails for another crucifixion of mankind. And their work was blessed—what strange irony of history!—by a conference of European Socialist Parties.

Surely, as the Socialist Parties have abandoned the principles of international Socialism, they have no choice but to adopt the principles of power politics. As the Socialist Parties have relinquished the theory that the anarchic economic conditions of capitalism and imperialism are the causes of wars, they must accept the theory that the future peace can be menaced only by a revival of German power. Consequently they have accepted an international settlement which, while eliminating Germany as a Power, conserves the very principles which caused the First Great War as well as the Second, principles which exclude, by their very nature, the “trinity of arbitration, security and disarmament”. Masked words!

In discussing this amazing policy with some of my friends who had attended the Socialist Conference, I learned how strongly their decisions were influenced by a "realistic point of view". It was considered utopian, and therefore senseless, to insist on principles which could not be materialised in the world as it unfortunately is. Another viewpoint was the desire to co-ordinate the decisions of the Socialist Conference with the policy of the governments in which the Socialists participate. Surely a conference presided over by a Minister of the British Crown could not in its declarations possibly contradict the policy of His Britannic Majesty's Government. Finally, the attitude of many Continental Socialists was influenced by the prevailing mood of the peoples of their countries. The immediate human reaction to the cruel Nazi oppression all over Europe is the recrudescence of nationalism. But nationalism is the most devastating force in frustrating any attempt at the creation of the sentiment which is above all needed for the reconstruction of the world: a sentiment of allegiance to humanity, which Lord Bryce had termed the "international mind", and for which he called during the tumult of the last Great War.

It appears that the Socialists first of all would have to promote the "international mind". And if international Socialism had stuck to fighting the war as an ideological war aiming at the extirpation of Fascism and imperialism in whatever national guise they appear, by "the establishment of a new Association or Commonwealth of States . . . securely founded on Socialism and Democracy" (as the Bournemouth Conference of the British Labour Party proclaimed at Whitsun 1940), and if British Labour, heeding Mr. Attlee's warning that "Europe must federate or perish", had taken the lead of the European working classes in a struggle for the unity of Europe, it would have been possible to counter sterile and poisonous nationalism effectively with the creative idea of internationalism.

Such was actually the attitude of the French and Italian Socialist resistance movements. It was not, however, the attitude of the Polish and Czech, of the Dutch and Belgian Socialists, residing in England, and certainly it was not in agreement with the imperialist designs of the Great Powers. So first British Labour, then later the majority of the Conference of the European Socialist Parties, felt it inconvenient to strive against the current; it adopted a more opportunistic line. Opportunism became the reigning principle of Socialist policy and ambiguous phraseology its literary fashion.

Opportunism, however, is in the long run the worst policy even in normal times, because it corrupts the character and disgraces

the idea for which one stands. For it is true, as a great Liberal had to teach Socialists, that "Disingenuousness or self-illusion, arising from a depressing deference to the existing state of things, or what is immediately practicable . . . is the result of compromising truth in the matter of forming and holding opinions". John Morley said still more in his thoughtful book, which, though written seventy years ago, appears more topical to-day than ever before. He held rightly that "Precisely because we believe that opinion, and nothing but opinion, can effect great permanent changes, that we ought to be careful to keep this most potent force honest, wholesome, fearless and independent." \*

The implementing of this truth was never more urgent than now, in the greatest crisis of humanity. Just because opportunism is sweeping the minds of men, Socialists should remain faithful to their principles; just because masked words are droning and skulking about mankind, Socialists should use the unequivocal language of men who mean gravely what they proclaim; just because the world has been turned into a wilderness, Socialists should give tortured humanity a vision of what the world could be if our "minds were ready".

A few Socialists attempted to attend to this duty. Some of them rallied behind the *International Socialist Forum* (a supplement of *The Left News*) which, on Victor Gollancz's suggestion, I was fortunate enough to be able to launch in 1941. This small group, presided over by Professor Harold J. Laski, included Louis de Brouckère, Grand Old Man of the Socialist International, Jim Middleton, Grand Old Man of British Socialism, Pietro Nenni, the executor of Matteotti's testament, H. N. Brailsford, the never-failing custodian of the good cause, and some younger Socialists of various nationalities, wholly devoted to the great idea. It seemed, however, that they played only the rôle of criers in the wilderness; the echo in the Socialist world of what they said was almost inaudible.

This now is the prospect with which humanity is faced: from the cataclysm of our days a desert will remain, stretching across almost the whole of Europe from the Rhine to the Volga (and over perhaps an equally vast territory in Asia), covered with the ruins of hundreds of cities and thousands of towns in which had dwelt many millions of men, women and children, with their universities and hospitals, libraries and galleries. What human diligence, ingenuity and art had created in centuries fell to dust in a small span of years. Humanity, which will survive the deluge of fire, famine and epidemics, will be reduced in numbers by perhaps one-fifth and in physical, mental and moral strength to an

\* John Morley, *On Compromise*, pp. 76, 77.

immeasurable degree. Never in history has mankind experienced a catastrophe on such an appalling scale. Never has history so strikingly vindicated the Socialist indictment of Capitalism, Nationalism and Imperialism. And for all its suffering and fighting mankind is to have a little bit of paper on which the Atlantic Charter, contested in its validity even by its authors, is inscribed.

“The works of ages sunk in one campaign,  
And lives of millions sacrificed in vain.”

Was everything really done in vain? Is there really no meaning in the most terrific occurrence of our age? Can it be true, as Gibbon asserted, that history is indeed little more than a register of the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind?

Marxists hold the view that the First Great War as well as the Second was generated by the contradictions inherent in the capitalist-imperialist system of society. They believed that the utter destruction of civilisation by ever-recurrent wars can be averted only by its transformation into a Socialist order of economy and an international organisation of nations. Marx did not share Gibbon's view of history. He derived from his reading in history the perception of changes in the economic and social structure of society, effected by the class struggle. He outlined his conception of history in his *Communist Manifesto*, almost a century ago. He stated that the “History of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle”. But he added a sentence to this statement which assumes a new significance in the light of the experience of our time. He observed that the class struggles in the past have ended “either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes”.

The insight of Marx's observation now became glaringly manifest. Because the class struggle after the First World War did not end (except in Russia) in “a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large”, another titanic convulsion of the capitalist-imperialist system was bound to follow. It came, and landed the contending classes at the brink of common ruin.

This lesson of history teaches the awe-inspiring task with which humanity is now faced. Without profound changes in the structure of the present national and international society, the final cataclysm cannot be warded off, in which every trace of civilisation may be obliterated. It teaches the working classes of the world that without the revival of the idea of Socialist internationalism the necessary changes of society cannot be accomplished.

It teaches, above all, that the working class has to bear an incomparably greater responsibility for the destiny of humanity than any other class of society, because only the workers are in fact able, by force of their economic and social position in the capitalist fabric of society, to perform the task which the survival of civilisation demands.



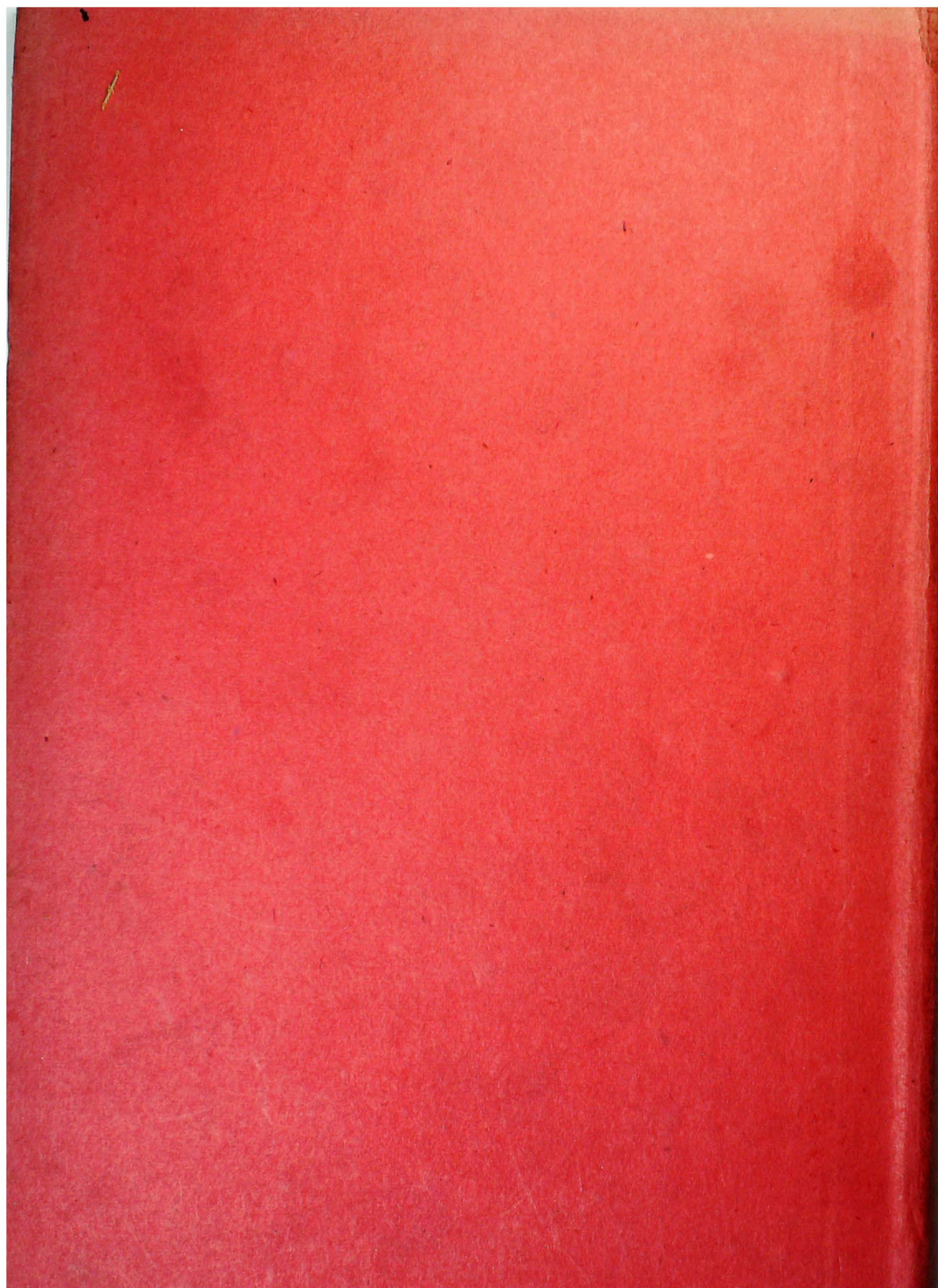
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